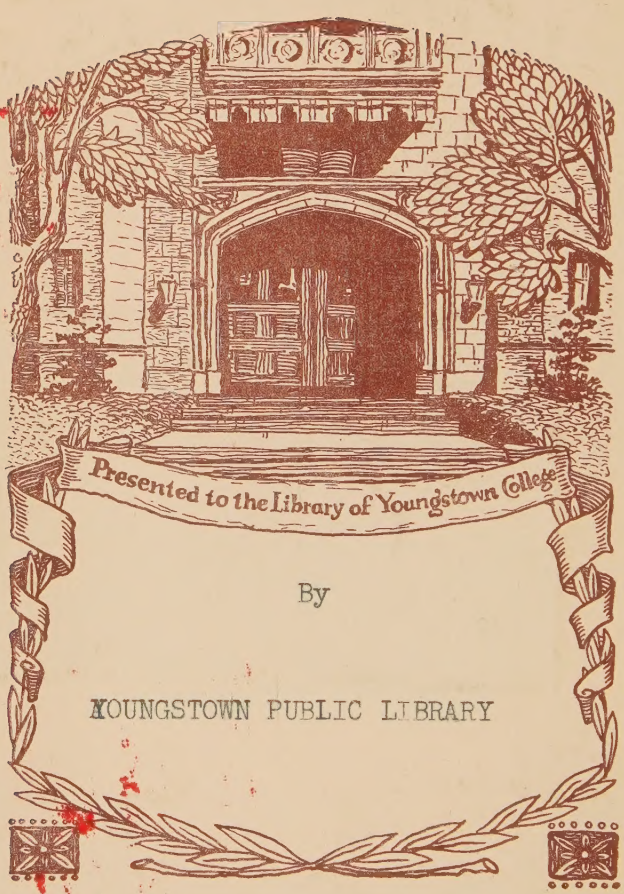
The Best British Short Stories of 1925

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN—JOHN COURNOS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THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1925

THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1925

WITH AN IRISH SUPPLEMENT

EDITED BY
EDWARD J. O'BRIEN
AND
JOHN COURNOS

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Second Printing, October, 1925

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BY WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We make grateful acknowledgment to the following authors, editors, publishers, and copyright holders for permission to reprint the stories included in this volume: Princess Bibesco, William Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., the Editors of *The Chicago Tribune,* A. E. Coppard, the Editors of *The Dial,* Lynn Doyle, Eleanor Farjeon, the Editor of *The Forum,* Viola Garvin, The Harrigan Press, Richard Hughes, Jarrolds Publishers (London), Ltd., D. H. Lawrence, Dorothy Macardle, Kenneth MacNichol, John Metcalfe, Allan N. Monkhouse, Liam O'Flaherty, A. M. Philpot (Publishers), Ltd., Marmaduke Pickthall, T. F. Powys, Will Smith, L. A. G. Strong, Hugh Walpole, E. L. Grant Watson, C. Henry Warren, A. W. Wells, Arthur Wheen, Francis Brett Young, and Curtis Brown, Ltd.

If we have overlooked any name in these acknowledgments, it has been through inadvertence, and we trust that the error will be overlooked.

We shall be grateful for suggestions from readers of this series, and shall particularly welcome the receipt of stories of merit which appear during the coming year in periodicals that do not come under our regular notice. Such communications may be addressed to *Edward J. O'Brien, Care of Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 30, Bedford Square, London, W. C., England.*

E. J. O.
J. C.

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INTRODUCTION

I

Brevity and natural limitations give the short story a precision as an art, beside which the art of the novel seems rambling and formless. Standing as a single crystalline episode or experience, the short story bears, perhaps, the same relation to the novel as a single Parable to the whole Gospel. The Parable is, indeed, a fragment, but it is a complete fragment, and if it is not a cumulation of truth, it is still better the essence of all truth, and is not less than the whole of which it is a fragment. Therefore, the very compactness of the shorter form enables us to study certain of its aspects which may throw a light on the novel as well and on the nature of elements common to all literary art. No question of comparative greatness is involved here. It is merely a matter of convenience. An easel picture is more easily to be comprehended on first sight than a more ambitious composition covering, perhaps, four walls and a ceiling. The larger may be inclusive of the former, but there are certain elements common to both.

In this essay I propose going only into one aspect of esthetic experience. This is the much mooted question of objectivity and subjectivity, of so-called artistic detachment on the one hand and individual coloration on the other. Old as the question is, it continues recurring; and, in truth, it is not often easy to say where the one ends and the other begins. But there is a prevalent school of criticism which as surely brands one work of art objective as another subjective. There is no doubt that, in the absence of collective creation or of any established convention or of social unity, such as existed in the dim past, when the emotional content of whole races poured itself into structures like sphinxes and pyramids, the Bible and Homer, and Gothic cathedrals, the personal element is on

the increase, and works of art, whether plastic or literary, are too often coloured by the individualities of their makers. Thus, we have arrived at a point where we speak of a man expressing himself. We do not say that an artist expresses the religion of his age—possibly, because the age is not essentially a religious one; but we do emphatically stress the individual's need of expressing himself. Democratization, a general levelling down, increased literacy (and with it the decreased stature of genius), are contributory factors which have given new if not superior conceptions to the arts. It is true that the Prolet-Cults of Soviet Russia, for better or worse, have given an impetus to "collective creation" coloured by class-consciousness, a religion of sorts; but this affects little the status of Western Europe and America, where individualism in the arts continues rampant and personal coloration is so often regarded as the acme of artistic achievement.

Curiously enough, side by side with this personalization of art, and, in particular, of the art of creative writing, the sciences have made such extraordinary strides as to dwarf esthetic achievement, however considerable it still is. Now, science is the most impersonal of all intellectual adventures. Its essence is in logic, just as the essence of art is in emotion. It is quite clear that while art can and does incorporate all the logic essential to itself, science cannot and does not have use for emotion. The dilemma of the artist becomes obvious, once it is realized that the age is a scientific age and that the arts are commonly supposed to reflect the spirit of the age. And so it is hardly strange that curious things have happened to some of the more serious artists. Some, notably in painting, have frankly accepted scientific formulas as a basis for their art. Others —this applies chiefly to writers—protest a scientific "detachment" as their attitude. They asseverate violently that art must be as objective as science itself. Mr. T. S. Eliot, a characteristic and brilliant representative of this school, says:

> "One is prepared for art when one has ceased to be interested in one's own emotions and experience except

as material; and when one has reached this point of indifference one will pick up and choose according to very different principles of those people who are still excited by their own feelings and passionately enthusiastic over their own passions."

Now, undoubtedly, there is some truth in this, but not the whole truth. Rigorously applied, this rule would exclude some of the greatest literary figures of our time: Ibsen, Tolstoy, Strindberg, to mention but three, and possibly the greatest of them all, Dostoevsky. Indeed, it has been my experience in discussing with exponents of the "objective" school to find that almost invariably they put Turgeniev among the elect and scorn Dostoevsky as being "journalese." The Russians themselves do not fall into this error, and while Turgeniev has ceased being a force, Dostoevsky continues to be a living stream of inspiration to the younger writers. It is to be noted that Mr. Eliot does not actually employ the word "science" in urging detachment upon the writer. But Chekhov, who started life as a physician, goes much further in his frank Russian way. He says:

"I do not belong to the class of literary men who take up a sceptical attitude toward science; and to the class of those who rush into anything with only their imagination to go upon, I should not like to belong."

Elsewhere, he reiterates:

"Familiarity with the natural sciences and with the scientific method has always kept me on my guard, and I have always tried where it was possible to be consistent with the facts of science, and where it was impossible, not to write at all."

A modest enough attitude, surely, but does there not lurk somewhere here a confession suggesting the possible superiority of science? Science has yet to make the counter admission of its desire to be consistent with the facts of esthetic emotion. Little wonder that we find Chekhov cavilling at the work of a man incomparably greater than

himself. There is his confession: "I bought Dostoevsky and am now reading him. It is fine, but very long and indiscreet. It is over-pretentious." Apparently, Chekhov could not abide the rôle of the visionary and the prophet in the artist. Lacking the faith of the author of "The Idiot," and bored with life, of whose tedium he speaks again and again, his own ambition was modest. "An artist," he says somewhere, "must only judge of what he understands, his field is just as limited as that of any other specialist." You could not have the scientific attitude more clearly defined, nor any greater implication of a surrender to the scientific spirit.

Chekhov, it seems, was proud of being a physician. Implored by a friend to drop his medical pretensions for the sake of his art, he piquantly replied: "Medicine is my lawful wife and literature is my mistress. When I get tired of one, I spend the night with the other."

Art, it has often been said, is "a jealous mistress." And ideas such as these might have ruined an artist less inherently fine than Chekhov. Chekhov himself, perhaps, was not so indifferent as he would have his correspondent believe; that much, surely, the last quotation amply proves. After all, the implication here is that you don't treat your mistress as you would your wife. No mistress would put up with it. The truth is, Chekhov was a poet in spite of himself, and what attracts us in his stories is not that they are in any way consistent with science, but that they are emotional statements fully consistent with poetry. Truth is not necessarily "scientific," nor is it a monopoly of science, since it proceeds from the heart as well as from the mind. Dostoevsky loathed science, so did Tolstoy who admired Chekhov's "Darling" not because it was "consistent with the facts of science," but because it sprang from a great heart. Tolstoy's own stories, as, for example, "God Sees the Truth, but Waits," would not answer the requirements of complete detachment, but the story I have mentioned does rise to the heights of a Parable conceived in the Christian doctrine of forgiveness and non-resistance to evil. Nevertheless, it remains a gem of art.

In any case there can be no complete detachment, how-

ever much the apostles of an art founded on scientific principles may prate about it. It is a relevant fact that no artist, however objective in reputation, has ever wholly succeeded in eliminating marks of personal identity; so that the work of an imitator is at once properly labelled as "in the manner of So and So." Now, if it were possible for an artist to be truly scientific, his product should be as impossible to identify in the personal sense as a scientific discovery or the solution of a problem in higher mathematics. Any detachment it is possible for an artist to have, and it is agreed that some detachment is necessary, must inevitably come of understanding and of tolerance towards the characters of his world and can be such in degree only. He must not openly plead, like an advocate in court; he must present a picture of relevant facts, a harmonious juxtaposition of which may impress the reader by the sheer force of emotion he has managed to impart to his design within the enforced limits of the frame. But to say that an artist must have complete detachment is to argue that he must forget that he is also a man, a being capable of loving and hating, of suffering and of joy, of feeling as well as of thinking. This is unthinkable.

Nevertheless, it must be conceded that some artists are generally regarded as objective, others as subjective. Chekhov is put in the first category, his contemporary Gorky in the other. This is easily to be explained. Chekhov, a physician, accepted his people as he accepted patients. They were a sad people living in a sad world, and they were not to blame for their sadness; they all showed the symptoms of their age, the end of an epoch. There is an infinite variety of them, and as in Whistler's paintings they "stand in" within their frames, grey, reticent wraiths, no more than shadows of living men and women, with all joy gone out of them. But Gorky's people, romantic and Nietzschean, rebels all of them, "stand out" of the picture and shriek their protest against life. In these two we have action and reaction, or the complete picture. It is specialism of sorts, if you like; and objective only in that it views its particular fragment completely. But what is narrower than specialism? The truly objective artist would

give us the complete picture. Chekhov's art is, possibly, superior to Gorky's because it is more difficult to make art of the dullness of every-day life than of gay, colourful rebels.

Are we, then, to reject the exuberant art of Turner, because it comes from an unreasoning flaming soul and does not, as some critics have pointed out, always comply with the common facts of science? Are we to reject the blazing sun in our hearts because the days are gloomy and dull? Are we to allow our imaginations to lie fallow because they lead us astray into unreal fairy worlds or into worlds so intensely, so exaggeratedly real, that scientific reality itself pales beside these, and "blessed madness" has its fling? Let us forget facts, scientific or otherwise, for a little and let us bask in suns shining from that part of us which some call the "soul" and which others would deny. God knows there are enough unpleasant facts in life, and let us create something which has a wholesome contempt for facts. Let us be unscientific.

Having, however, conceded that a degree of detachment is essential to the artist, and at the same time established the fact that no artist, being a man and not a machine, has mastered absolute detachment, the question occurs: What is it, if not detachment, that marks the artist, even the most objective artist, and distinguishes him from his fellows? And the answer is, his personality, his poetry, his soul (nowadays, a contemptuous, unmentionable word!). These shine through whatever mask he has imposed on his work. If he betrays it nowhere else, he betrays it in his mask, that is, his style, which, however unconsciously, reveals ingrained qualities essentially human and tender. The greater the man and the artist, the greater the revelation of this. Style is the man. And not all the harsh, cruel content—his chosen material—can hide his humanity.

An artist, then, is not to be measured wholly by his detachment or non-detachment, but by the degree of poetry dormant in the man and outwardly expressed by symbols, which, if he is a writer, happen to be words.

By poetry one does not mean rhyme or even rhythm, not external decoration or ornament, but something as inher-

ent and integral to the work as blood is to the body. A work may have all these superficial embellishments, yet lack poetry. Or it may take the form of prose, yet be rich in the essence of poetical emotion. It is interesting to observe that certain continental novels have borne on the title page the word, Poem. A notable example is Gogol's "Dead Souls." "Don Quixote" might justly be called a Poem. "Moby Dick" might also bear the appellation without protest. For the conception of the book is poetic, and into it the author has poured his whole demoniac soul and aspiration.

The intimate itself, however unobjective in conception, has a way of becoming universal, because a man's really deep experiences touch us deeply and, in the ultimate sense, contain comething common to us all. The Freudian significance of "Moby Dick" has been touched upon lately by a number of critics, but what interests us is not that the work has scientific, psychoanalytic values, but that Melville imparted poetical values to his work by his personal passion, so that symbols themselves are the unconscious result, just as the conception is the unconscious source of the whole. It is not the same thing as the deliberate setting out to illustrate the Freudian doctrine by writing fiction about it, as so many writers have done lately. Unconscious symbols make poetry, just as conscious symbols kill it. Freshness and spontaneity and surprise are the soul of art. But such scientific fictions as we have described are mere text books, and often poor text books at that. Such is the reward of artists who have wholly surrendered to science, to complete objectivity and detachment.

Croce, in "Poetry and Non-Poetry," published lately in English translation under the less relevant title of "European Literature in the Nineteenth Century," dwells at length on this poetical distinction which makes a work of art and on the lack of it which at best does not deprive a work of its significance as a "cultural Landmark." "In true poetry," he says, "there is discovery, penetration by the imagination of a world previously unknown; here the simplest expressions fill us with surprise and with joy, because they reveal us to ourselves." He gives the word

Poetry a broad meaning, as, for instance, while decrying the exaggerated merits of Walter Scott, he can still insist that "this smile of goodness is perhaps Walter Scott's most purely poetical possession, for it illumines even his comic characters, who sometimes descend to the level of the stereotyped, but are often contained within just limits." While "the honest Doctor Zola, the Docteur Tissot of modern society," he considers to be a poet "only to a very slight degree," Maupassant he rightly finds a true poet, and here he furnishes us with a definition as final as it is illuminating:

> "Maupassant's stories are lyrical stories, not because they are written with emphasis and lyricism (things of which they show themselves to be altogether free), but because the lyric is really intrinsic to the form of the narrative, and shapes each part of it, without mixtures and without leaving any residue. In like manner those parts which are pointed to as especially lyrical, in the rhetorical sense of the word, never separate themselves from the narrative and discursive tone of prose, and speaking thus simply, gradually accelerate the rhythm and rise spontaneously to poetry."

Even the more debatable Ibsen, Croce places among the poets, in spite of the fact that he has been so often charged by the critics with verging on the production of critical treatises. Ibsen's works, asserts Croce, were dramas "from the beginning, in their primordial cell, and the soul of the poet was profoundly and solely dramatic. . . . The poet gives them (his creations) faces, gestures, garments, realizing them completely, because for him they belong to reality and not to categories of thought."

Anthologies of short stories are popular just now, and they are especially valuable for the study of the problem mooted here, because, within a narrow compass, you have many distinct personalities presented, and whatever the degree of their detachment, they are all different and all stamped with the mark of their personality, amply revealed in their style and in their capacity for seeing life as a spec-

tacle to be observed with eyes more or less individual and having a definite point of view. It is all the more interesting because the art of the short story, depending as it does more on a single centric episode than on progressive development of character is in its very nature more detached than the art of the full-length novel can ever be. In the longer narrative, which permits many by-plays and digressions, an author is bound to give himself away somewhere, if but through the mouth of one of his characters.

Finally, science and art are not incompatible; but in a successful marriage, art must still remain the master. The complete surrender of that ductile, tender lady to the rigid demands of science can but reduce her to the rôle of a bondswoman. Art become self-conscious and analytical has begun to fear her own virtues: the absurd, the heroic and the sublime. The last, indeed, has become anathema. It would be good to see these back. It is not for science, with the sense of utter detachment it brings, to bring them back. The artist alone has the power to shake off his shackles, to reclaim his heritage, much as it may displease the mechanists and the scientific fanatics. It was Blake who said: "Art, the tree of life; Science, the tree of death."

And when all is said and done, true literary detachment belongs almost alone to the best-sellers and to all those who cater to supply the demand. These truly have no personal passions to counter, no axes to grind. They work according to formula. But those of us who are still men of flesh and bones, who think, feel, love and suffer, and envision death, cannot be so callous to truth, and we inevitably must colour everything we touch with our own blood and dreams.

JOHN COURNOS.

Headlands,
Port Isaac,
Cornwall.

July, 1925.

II

For the benefit of readers unacquainted with the earlier volumes of this series, I repeat here a brief summary of the principles which have governed our choice of stories. We have set ourselves the task of disengaging the essential human qualities in our contemporary fiction which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life. We are not at all interested in formulæ, and organized criticism at its best would be nothing more than dead criticism, as all dogmatic interpretation of life is always dead. What has interested us, to the exclusion of other things, is the fresh, living current which flows through the best British and Irish work. and the psychological and imaginative reality which writers have conferred upon it.

No substance is of importance in fiction, unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. Inorganic fiction has been our curse in the past, and bids fair to remain so, unless we exercise much greater artistic discrimination than we display at present.

The present record covers the period from June, 1924, to May, 1925, inclusive. During this period we have sought to select from the stories published in British and American periodicals those stories by British and Irish authors which have rendered life imaginatively in organic substance and artistic form. Substance is something achieved by the artist in every creation, rather than something already present, and accordingly a fact or a group of facts in a story only attains substantial embodiment when the artist's power of compelling imaginative persuasion transforms it into a living truth. The first test of a short story, therefore, in any qualitative analysis is to report upon how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents. This test may be conveniently called the test of substance.

But a second test is necessary if the story is to take rank above other stories. The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most beautiful and satisfying

form, by skillful selection and arrangement of his materials, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

We have recorded here the names of a group of stories which possess, we believe, the distinction of uniting genuine substance and artistic form in a closely woven pattern with such sincerity that they are worthy of being reprinted. If all of these stories were republished, they would not occupy more space than six or seven novels of average length. Our selection of them does not imply the critical belief that they are great stories. A year which produced one great story would be an exceptional one. It is simply to be taken as meaning that we have found the equivalent of six or seven volumes worthy of republication among all the stories published during the period under consideration. In compiling this book we have permitted no personal preference or prejudice consciously to influence our judgment.

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN.

London.
July 11, 1925.

THE BEST BRITISH SHORT STORIES OF 1925

RED HAIR[1]

By PRINCESS ELIZABETH BIBESCO

(From *The Chicago Tribune*)

OF course, she was far from being the only person to be irritated by them. Only they struck her at a peculiar angle; she couldn't escape from them. They were, so to speak, a life sentence. And bumping your wings only made the feathers come out. She had been, she reflected, so feathery once. Besides, when, as she put it to herself, she tried to keep her own end up, they would put their fingers in their ears mentally, just as if she were a noise. They always behaved as if the language of their thoughts was Russian to her (which it was), and when they talked to her they instinctively translated what they had to say into words which they would never have used with one another. So whenever she was with them she spent her time between being bewildered and being humiliated. What if they were clever? Cleverness isn't everything.

One day she overheard her mother-in-law saying: "It's not so much that poor Linda isn't very intelligent—lots of unintelligent people are so understanding—but it's such a pity that she can't be a little more acquiescent. She was so much sweeter before she married."

"That is our fault," her daughter had retorted.

It was so characteristic of them, Linda thought furiously, even to see that. And why poor? Because she was not like them, or because she was not liked by them? And how dared they assume that either constituted a ca[illegible] for pity?

"I don't know why she should be so on the defen[illegible] Susan had continued. "We welcomed her with open [illegible]

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"And open minds," Lady Tarleton added, "only I suppose that our arms have never quite closed round her and that she wants a niche in our minds. We haven't given her that, either, have we?"

"Perhaps not," her daughter agreed, and then, with that resolute attempt to do her justice which Linda found most unbearable of all: "She has such lovely hair—a real burning bush."

Linda's hair was beautiful. It flamed riotously all over her head. But for it her face would have been entirely commonplace—a little mouth, too little; a nose like two nostrils in an inexperienced full face drawing (you felt that it could not exist at all in profile); pale blue eyes with rather pale eyelashes; and a pretty white skin always on the brink of freckles. But nothing emphatic; nothing to arrest your attention except her hair.

It was her hair which might make people think her romantic if they didn't think.

It was her hair which had first made Dick's eyes wander towards her, and had subsequently made him follow them until its glowing mass became entangled in his thoughts and his dreams, and out of its glinting fabric a web was woven from which he could not escape.

At dinner at Tarleton, with a hundred ideas like colored balls in the air together, and every one (so it seemed to Linda) talking at the same time and yet managing to hear what every one else said—sometimes, she couldn't imagine why, a silence would follow one of her own remarks. Dick's eyes, lit by the intellectual battle that he loved, would soften a little as he saw the light itself nestling in the red gold softness of his wife's head, and his thoughts would wander—was it to her or to his image of her?

Linda enjoyed talking about books. Like all people who n't read much, she was always tremendously impressed the last thing that she had read, urging it upon every lse. Each book to her was a wild thing which she had strange and remote as a desert island, discovered by urce and courage. Not, of course, that she had not ought up in cultivated circles. She had once known friend of W. L. George's. But when she brought

this cat out of her bag as if it had been a beautiful purring Persian full of slow pride, Lady Tarleton, looking past her with shortsighted, friendly eyes, had murmured absent-mindedly: "W. L. George, dear? Who is W. L. George?"

And Linda, instead of feeling elated, proud to be able to confound such gross ignorance, had, on the contrary, felt small and crushed as if, by some absurd loaded dice of providence, only the things that her mother-in-law knew about had importance.

Lady Tarleton's effortless preëminence was a continual source of surprise to Linda. Haphazard in her methods, shortsighted, with friendly, absent-minded manners, how had she managed to be an influence, a comfort, and an inspiration to so many different and divergent people?

Susan appeared far more positive. Penetrating and clear with a certain hard fineness, mastering with difficulty the impatience of her fastidiousness, but softening all the same under her mother's gentle chidings. "After all, darling, pretenses are so consoling."

"Pretendings," Susan amended with a smile. "You are so much nicer than I am, mamma."

Lord Tarleton was gentle and remote and aloof. Linda would twine herself into his arms—half creeper, half cat—and he would say: "There, there," patting her nervously from the depths of his embarrassment.

"I never know what she is thinking about," he would explain to his wife, who would answer gently, "She is just purring at you. It is rather nice, don't you think?"

"Well, you may be right, my dear," he would agree vaguely. He found his daughter-in-law disconcerting.

"They are all very good at their books," Linda would explain to her family—and the phrase clearly conveyed a perfectly definite meaning to them.

"What can she and Dick talk about when they are alone?" Susan asked her mother desperately.

"Perhaps they don't exactly talk, dear."

"But Dick! Think of Dick!"

His mother thought of him. "There is always her hair," she murmured vaguely.

"Well, he can't stay entangled in that forever."

"Perhaps not. But we mustn't—whatever we do we mustn't try to unwind him."

"Dick of all people!"—Susan was bitter—"with his uncompromising sensitiveness."

"Don't you think," her mother protested gently, "that we are a little inclined to want everything paid in our own currency?"

"Dick's currency."

"Perhaps in a sort of unconscious way he wanted to escape from it."

Susan met this without flinching. Then they heard Linda's high, tinkling laugh and her high, shallow voice saying, "I find it so difficult not to see both sides of a question."

Her companion's answer was inaudible, but the breeze brought them a giggle from Linda.

Susan raised her eyebrows. "Paper money," she said. "Tissue paper money."

. . . . . .

Semi-unconsciously Linda tried to keep Dick away from his family as much as possible. She didn't enjoy being at Tarleton. There were always people sitting about talking, talking, talking. "I don't see why they think themselves so clever," she would say sarcastically. "Anyone can talk."

But all the same these eternal conversational orgies mystified her. One could discuss people and clothes and books and plays, but when one had explained that something was "perfectly rotten" or "perfectly lovely" there was really nothing more to be said; whereas the Tarletons and their friends went on and on and on until everything got so buried in words that one really didn't know what one was talking about.

And their standards were so queer. Dick, who never looked at another woman, talked so oddly about marriage, and when she laughed a little coyly to show that she knew that it was nonsense, no one said, as her father certainly would have done, "What does little Mrs. Home Ruler think?" And when she had commented brightly, "We women know all about you men," there had been a startled

silence interrupted by a young man in spectacles asking, "What exactly do you mean by all?" To which she had not unnaturally answered: "Ask the cat."

At that moment Lord Tarleton had come in and said, "Cats? What cats are you talking about?" And there had been an awkward pause, breathlessly curtailed by Susan's saying, "I love the little short-haired grey ones. They have so much more outline than Persians." And the young man had looked at her with loving eyes and murmured, "Yes, you would—you, who love trees in winter, shorn of obliterating leaves."

They were wrong headed, Linda reflected. That was what it was. Trees were meant to have leaves. And what did they mean by obliterating? They always seemed to get their words wrong. It was so confusing. "Marriage is such a silly form of hate," Susan had said earlier in the day, and nobody had corrected her. No doubt it was talking so much that was at the bottom of all the mischief.

Linda often longed to ask Dick about his family. There were, she felt, a large number of things that he could explain to her. But he always looked so puzzled when she asked him questions.

On the night of the cat conversation Susan was sitting in her mother's bedroom.

"And marriage is called a sacrament," she said bitterly.

For a moment Lady Tarleton's shortsighted eyes looked over the wall that sacrament had been to her into distant spaces of unknown, vivid realizations.

"I think perhaps it is," she dissented gently—almost apologetically.

"And one has to be strangled for life by a few red hairs?"

Lady Tarleton smiled.

"We all have our red hairs, don't we? At least I do hope we have."

"But not nothing else—absolutely nothing else."

"No one could be more positive than Linda. As she says herself, she always knows her own mind."

"Yes," Susan was still bitter, " 'when once I make up my mind, I make up my mind,' as if there were the smallest hope of ever untying it."

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"I think, darling"—her mother's voice was very soft—"you would be happier if you never thought of the word 'mind' in conversation with Linda. Just face the fact once and for all that she hasn't got one."

"There are so many years to come. What will Dick do?" Susan moaned.

Dick tried to be impartial, or rather, equally partial to both sides. Thinking of his wife, he would feel her curling herself into his arms like a little warm, fluttering bird with a frightened, beating heart subsiding gently into confidence; or he would see her tousled scarlet head spreading over the pillow and her half-awake, wholly surprised eyes beginning anew each morning to get accustomed to the world. And when she murmured: "What did Mr. Dyke mean by 'obliterating leaves'?" he would laugh and kiss her and burn his fingers in her hair.

As for his family—well, they didn't need protection. Love—how much he loved them; admiration—how much he admired them; confidence, in the sense in which it meant trusting rather than confiding—all of these things he felt. But defending them would be like defending an army against a humming bird—an operation which could only be necessary if the army knew the meaning of a humming bird.

In dealing with the relations of his wife and his family, Dick instinctively sought refuge in metaphors. Insidiously they would lead him astray until he drifted away with them out of reach of reality.

Dick was rather like his father.

. . . . . .

"And it never gets any darker," Lady Tarleton's short-sighted eyes were almost touching Linda's hair as it swirled about over her pillow.

"No; it has always been the same," Linda said.

Susan was getting a little tired of the zest with which Mr. Dyke believed in free will. It contrived to make her so responsible for herself—not on broad, generous lines of theories and achievements and personality, but in the most exasperating precision and detail. The fact that Mr. Dyke, who was in love with her, thought her habit of biting her

nails and all of the other tricks with which she had for years carried on a sort of trench warfare, divine exhalations of her perfection was not really consoling. It was more restful to assume that her great height (which she hated) had been foisted on to her by God and that when she was irritable it was because she was tired. But Mr. Dyke could admit none of these compromises between deities. Her tallness was the shooting up of her soul; her irritability, sparks from the fire of her intellect. All of which was fatiguing to Susan, who was, in addition, annoyed with Mr. Dyke for being called Demetrius—an annoyance which she admitted would have been more justified by his philosophy than it was by hers.

The topic was being discussed after dinner.

"After all," Dick said, "if you tell a woman she is beautiful you give it and she accepts it as a compliment to herself rather than to God."

"And pray, when did you last tell a woman she was beautiful?" asked Linda roguishly.

Susan ignored her.

"I suppose one does stamp one's own looks—trade mark them, so to speak," she agreed. "But admitting that you pour expression into your eyes, what about their shape? Surely you can't be asked to accept responsibility for a poached egg when you wanted an almond?"

"Your own poached egg," Mr. Dyke spoke with gravity, "is better than anyone else's almond."

"Clearly." Susan was dry. "But not better than one's own almond would have been."

"One man's almond is another man's poached egg," said Dick flippantly; but Mr. Dyke was not to be put off so easily.

"It is immaterial whether it is a poached egg or an almond," he explained almost reproachfully. "The point is that it is your own."

"There is a time for everything," Linda said. "No one wants a poached egg for dinner or an almond at breakfast."

Dick laughed. Mr. Dyke looked at Linda, opened his mouth, and then shut it again.

Susan said under her breath, "What on earth does she

imagine we're talking about?" and then reproached herself for her odious habit—of which she was always guiltily conscious—of saying things under her breath hoping that they would be heard.

"I think," Lady Tarleton said gently, "that in a way people achieve their own looks. Not the outlines, perhaps, but the filling in. A way of walking, a way of moving your head, certain laughs, certain gestures, so that it is not really your height that counts but your carriage, not your mouth that matters but the way you smile."

"Clearly," approved Mr. Dyke, "clearly." And he cast a surreptitious glance at Linda with the secretly satisfied feeling that to her it would probably be everything but clear.

But Susan was out of temper. "I sha'n't feel responsible for the color of my hair till I dye it," she said. "Will you, Linda?"

There was a horrified pause, as everyone except Dick believed that Linda's hair was the only thing for which she could conceivably feel proud of being responsible.

"I should never dye my hair," the victim explained, "any more than I would curl it if it weren't naturally curly. As mother says, nature knows her own business best."

Lady Tarleton said gently, "She certainly did in your case, my dear."

"I can't see why one shouldn't receive credit for transforming a mouse into a raven or a fox." Susan, who was cross, couldn't get her teeth out of the subject.

"I shouldn't have thought you went in much for changing yourself," Dick retorted quietly.

Susan flushed.

"In your sister change would be disloyalty," flashed Mr. Dyke.

"I always longed to have red hair," Lady Tarleton smiled at them all. "I wanted it so badly that I used to look through my whole hair colored crop for one symptom."

"Think," Susan laughed, "if you had plunged quite young and achieved your own head."

"One achieves so many failures as it is," observed her mother a little grimly.

Dick and Linda walked out on to the terrace.

"Your family are always achieving things," she said plaintively.

He was silent.

"Would you like me to achieve?" she asked, curling into him.

"The important thing is to be," he said gently.

The moon caught her. Her head was lifted up to him like a thirsty flower.

"I love you," he said, kissing her passionately.

As she entered the drawing room she began smoothing her hair.

. . . . . .

"Father's made a riddle," Linda, who was reading her letters, informed an unexpectant breakfast table. "Why are two men no match for one woman?"

Susan, who was feeling guilty, tried to look puzzled.

"Because no woman can make a match with more than one man."

"How clever," Lady Tarleton said. "I have never guessed a riddle in my life. It would be so nice to be able to just once before I died."

"And he wrote it himself," Linda explained triumphantly. "Father's a funny one," she added. "Why sometimes I feel I must go home just to have a good laugh."

"How nice," murmured Lady Tarleton a little wanly.

"Not but what there's a funny side to everything," Linda continued brightly, "but father's a rare one for seeing it. I don't know what he'd do here," she added candidly, "though, of course, it's not everyone likes a joke."

Demetrius felt strongly that she ought to be told—what, exactly, he didn't know. Nevertheless, when breakfast was over he asked her to show him the kitchen garden. Linda was delighted. She arched her neck at him, smiled through half-shut eyes, allowed the smoke to come through her lips in slow blue coils—in fact, she treated him just as if he were one of her own "young men."

"I do like a woman to be womanly, don't you?" she asked sweetly, unconscious that to Mr. Dyke a woman was invariably either a goddess or a female.

"What exactly do you mean by womanly?" Demetrius

was always anxious to be sure that other people knew what they meant.

"Feminine," Linda explained. "Mother always says men should be men and women women. Of course, not everyone can have a way with them, but that's no reason for behaving like a man."

Mr. Dyke was bewildered. Linda had never known him so silent.

"Susan's not like other girls," she went on.

"Your sister-in-law is not a girl," Demetrius interrupted. "She is a woman."

It sounded rather lame.

"Quite," Linda agreed," she's never been young. That's what it is. Of course, it keeps men off, her being so like a man herself."

Mr. Dyke stared. He was speechless.

"Of course, I dare say she'd change if Mr. All Right came along," his companion added magnanimously.

"How dare you talk about her," Mr. Dyke shouted. "How dare you, you shallow, empty headed—you—you thing? God hasn't given you eyes you could see with." Demetrius was spluttering with hate.

Linda shrank back. Then she said in a low voice, "Shallow—empty headed. That's what they think me, isn't it?"

Then she burst into tears. "I didn't want to come here. I never asked to live among clever people."

Mr. Dyke was horribly embarrassed. He didn't know what to do.

"Please, Mrs. Tarleton, please don't cry. I didn't mean it—really I didn't. I lost my temper. You see I—I—love Susan, and I couldn't bear the way you spoke of her. You do see, don't you?" Demetrius pleading became suddenly human.

Linda, who dearly liked a love affair, dried her eyes and dabbed a little powder on her face.

"That's all right," she said. "I'm a bit hasty myself." And then—"All's fair in love and war."

Mr. Dyke felt abashed. She had, after all, been very generous.

That night Linda thought—or rather, the words "shallow, empty" went round and round in her head.

Yes, that was what they thought about her. She had always been an alien to them—somebody else's pet—a nasty little yapping dog—the sort they never would have dreamed of having themselves. Of course, they patted her. It was the easiest thing to do. And then Linda thought of herself—tenderly and a little romantically.

She had been sweet and gentle and pretty, soft and alluring and womanly. Intelligent—yes; but not intellectual. What was the point of an intellectual woman? "Intuition," reflected Linda with satisfaction; that was what she had got. Women arrived by instinct at the point which men reached—more slowly—by reason. The eternal feminine, ever since she had first heard of it, had always dominated her conception of life. The functions of the two sexes were quite distinct and different. Charming women weren't meant to bother their pretty heads. Man by plodding logic dominated the material world, while woman attracted and distracted, keeping hidden away her primeval wisdom.

Femininity. Linda knew just the blend of the sentimental, the platitudinous, and the coy out of which it was made. In her world women turned men round their little fingers; the male was managed without his knowing it. It was a matter of being dainty and pouting, of having pretty ways, and not showing how clever you were. And as an outlet there was always a giggling freemasonry of female friends.

But after her marriage somehow or other her values wouldn't fit into her new life. Dick never complained of the food, never grumbled about the money she spent, never objected to her gentleman friends—in fact, from the point of view of being managed he could hardly be said to exist. When she had told him that Bertie had kissed her in a taxi, he had said: "Poor Bertie," which had seemed to her an altogether absurd thing to say, though not quite so absurd as Susan's "Surely not as bad as that" when Linda told her that Bertie was quite the gentleman."

The Tarletons really were as queer as they could be. "Quaint," she called them to her family, because one must

be loyal. You couldn't talk anything over with Susan. She really didn't seem to know what you meant.

"I always think that we women should stick together," Linda had explained to her. "I tell my young men straight out: 'Don't you believe that women can't be friends. It may suit your book to think so, but it's not true."

Susan had agreed rather vaguely, while Linda continued: "I always say, 'Now, don't you play the Lords of Creation. We women can do quite well without you,' " and Susan had answered: "I have never seen a woman who could. I can't myself."

Linda had been quite horrified. Nice women didn't talk like that. What would her mother have said?

The relations between the Harrises and the Tarletons had always been a little strained. Mr. Harris had said to Lord Tarleton: "Well, the young people may regard us as old fogies, but we're not too old to remember kissing time."

And Mrs. Harris had said to Dick: "Whip her when she's naughty and kiss her when she's good. That's the language a woman understands."

But it had clearly not been a language that Dick understood.

Mrs. Harris had always been anxious to explain to Lady Tarleton what a lot of chances Linda had had, her stories ending triumphantly with phrases like "And we all know how difficult it is to make a naval man take 'no' for an answer." But Lady Tarleton had clearly not known.

They were an odd family, Linda reflected; ignorant with all their book learning. What irritated her most of all about them was their calm way of not seeing things. There was nothing they couldn't overlook if they wanted to. She herself would frequently explain to her mother, "I just ignored him." But it always meant a toss of the head, a deliberately turned back, an ostentatiously hummed tune. Lady Tarleton, on the other hand, simply didn't seem to notice. She would look at you with smiling, friendly eyes, and what you had said or done was irretrievably lost, dissolving altogether in her non-recognition. Susan was much less masterly than her mother. If you had annoyed her

she would look through you, not at you; and her snub would set you on your feet again.

"You can always make things vanish," Linda had heard her say to Lady Tarleton, "with your unseeing and all-seeing eye, reducing irrelevant, disagreeable things to their proper unimportance. I endow them with my indignation and, of course, it gives them a new lease of life."

That mother and daughter adored each other, Linda could not deny. And yet how odd they were together—always generalizing. Lady Tarleton never seemed to take a proper mother's interest at all. She asked no questions, laid down no rules, invited no confidences. And yet what was it that Mr. Dyke had said? That their whole relationship was irrigated by understanding. Linda remembered wondering if he meant "irritated," but, of course, that wouldn't have made sense either.

Poor Demetrius! To think that he was in love with Susan! It seemed so odd. Susan, who was so tall and erect and firm, so pitiably without what Mrs. Harris called the *"je ne sais quoi."*

It really was odd, Linda thought, but she brightened a little when she remembered that there was, after all, no accounting for tastes.

"Mr. Dyke wants to marry Susan," she told Dick, a little triumphant at being able to impart such exciting information.

"Poor Demetrius; she will never marry him." Dick didn't seem at all surprised by her news. "People are always wanting to marry Susan."

Linda was wide eyed with amazement.

"Do you mean to say she's had several proposals?"

Dick laughed. "Dozens. But she's so uncompromising. She says that every marriage represents a certain lapse of fastidiousness. Of course I see what she means."

"I don't," snapped Linda, and she left the room.

"My precious!" Catching up with her in the passage, Dick caught her in his arms.

He still loved the things she didn't see.

Linda felt that her knowledge of Mr. Dyke's secret

created a bond between them. She would sit down next to him and have a little talk.

"I do like books," she would say. "I've always said to father, 'There's a great art in writing.' He would tease me so when I was little and say: 'What sort of a stocking are we knitting today? Blue, I'll be bound.' "

Mr. Dyke never knew what to answer.

"Your father must be an exceptional man," he would murmur truthfully.

"I wish you knew him." Linda was eager. "He's so original. He says a man who's made a good joke has done a good deed. He told Mr. Norris—that's our clergyman—so. 'Healthy laughter,' he said, 'wholesome laughter is a benefit to mankind.' "

"And what did Mr. Norris say?"

"He quite agreed. He says you please God if you play heartily and work heartily."

Demetrius was a little disappointed by Mr. Norris, who clearly didn't come up to the Harris standard.

Susan said to him later in the day, "Do you think it is quite honorable to draw poor Linda out?"

"Mrs. Tarleton is a nice woman," he answered unexpectedly. "And without her red hair she would probably have been a happy one."

"She is happy," murmured Lady Tarleton, and then, gently rebuking Susan, "So is Dick."

"It isn't being in love; it's loving that makes you happy," Susan said passionately. "It's like the difference between beauty and charm. What is left when your beauty has gone, when the tide is out, and all the hidden boots and sardine tins are revealed? Charm is high tide forever."

"Some tides go out and leave starfish and little pink shells and the sunset reflected in wet sand."

"It's safest all covered up," Susan said harshly.

Linda became more and more conscious of the way her in-laws harped on her hair. "One would think it was my only feature," she would say resentfully, and indeed it did sometimes seem as if it were the only cushion on which the whole family could fall back with relief.

Susan had refused Demetrius, who had returned to Lon-

don; but there had been no talk about it. Linda wanted to know from Lady Tarleton exactly what he had said.

"I don't know, dear. I didn't ask."

It was most unnatural, Linda thought, and as she was feeling cross, she added, "Susan is getting on."

"Getting on, dear? Getting on with what?"

It was hopeless, Linda thought. One couldn't make them understand anything. They simply weren't normal.

After Mr. Dyke had left for the station she had gone to put her arms round Susan to cheer her up.

"You can confide in me, darling. I know all about it. Just treat me as if I were your own sister."

Susan had looked altogether bewildered.

"Did he try to kiss you? I know he was terribly in love."

Susan had looked at her for a moment with the most absolute contempt. Then she had given a short laugh and said: "Linda, you are impertinent without being funny."

Linda had complained to Dick, but for once he had taken his sister's side.

"My dear child, you can surely see that that wasn't a question you could ask or she could answer."

"I don't see it at all," Linda had said. "Unnatural, that's what you all are," and she had refused to kiss him good-night.

It was not till some time after that that she discovered that Susan was writing a book.

"Did you find the plot abroad?" she asked wonderingly.

Increasingly she felt the necessity of impressing the Tarletons. But how was one to set about it?

Love affairs were no good. They never seemed surprised or shocked or even interested. Nothing that she did or was affected them at all except with slight distaste. They praised laboriously. They reproved rarely. They commented never. There was only one way in which she dazzled them—her hair. And even that, she supposed, she had not achieved.

She remembered the conversation with Demetrius and how Susan had said, "I sha'n't feel responsible for my hair until I dye it." Then she looked at herself in the glass.

Her head really was lovely—spun out of 'cellos and violins, squirrels and mahogany and October. Surely it was much more her own coming from God than from a beauty specialist? Yet she had been told that it was "not the gift but the thought that mattered." That clearly was what the Tarletons meant.

Every *cliché* was to Linda an Open Sesame. Suddenly she felt that she understood her in-laws. They were revealed to her in the terms of little china vases with "A present from Margate," bazaar tea cosies and shell work boxes. Isn't the concrete, too, a metaphor? Reading without tears, the picture of the cat that precedes the word, the image of a madonna which does duty for a conception, all of that process of simplification and consummation which takes refuge in or rises to symbols—had not Linda discovered it when suddenly the Tarletons were revealed to her in the phrase, "It is not the gift but the thought that matters"?

No one was staying at Tarleton. It was just a family party. It would after all, Linda thought, have been impossible to do it in front of strangers.

Dinner had been characteristic. Lord Tarleton had said that it was surprising how few people went to Iceland. The whole family had agreed that P. G. Wodehouse was a man of genius and that if you were foolish enough not to see his profound exquisite distinction you need only put it next to Galsworthy's "Ladies and Gentlemen" presumably intending to show breeding.

Linda had said, "But I thought you didn't like slang"; and Dick had answered, "That is where the genius comes in."

Then Linda had protested, "But Mr. Galsworthy is very intellectual," and Dick had said that the danger of making a rule about humanity was that either your characters were exceptions or else they were not human beings; and Susan explained that profiteering unhappiness was artistically ruinous and that she could forgive people everything except being misunderstood.

Linda had said, "Christ was misunderstood," and Susan had retorted, "How cynical you are."

Then Lady Tarleton had come to the rescue with: "What a lovely gold dress, dear. It catches gleams from your hair."

Linda straightened herself; she tossed her head. All of the gentility which had been alike her standby and her downfall fell from her.

"You like my hair, don't you?" she said.

Because the tone of her voice was painful to them all, Lady Tarleton smiled a little vaguely. Susan curled her lip. Lord Tarleton averted his eyes and withdrew his attention, and Dick looked straight at his wife.

"Well, I don't suppose you ever guessed it, for all your cleverness. But it's dyed."

Lord Tarleton heard the last word. "Who has died?" he asked.

Susan said consolingly: "No, I never should have guessed."

Lady Tarleton murmured, "It's very pretty, all the same."

Linda looked at them. Where had her bombshell disappeared to? No one had even asked her how she had done it, by what means the miracle had been achieved.

An overwhelming feeling of discouragement came over her. Her eyes filled with tears. Uncertainly, as if she couldn't quite see where she was going she left the room.

"It was brave of her to tell us," commented Lady Tarleton with gentle decisiveness.

Dick dashed out after his wife.

"My darling," he said, "my very own absurd, magnificent liar."

FIFTY POUNDS[1]

By A. E. COPPARD

(From *The Calendar*)

AFTER tea Philip Repton and Eulalia Burnes discussed their gloomy circumstances. Repton was the precarious sort of London journalist, a dark, deliberating man, lean and drooping, full of genteel unprosperity, who wrote articles about "Single Tax," "Diet and Reason," "The Futility of this, that, and the other," or "The Significance of the other, that and this"; all done with a bleak care, and signed "P. Stick Repton." Eulalia was brown-haired and hardy, undeliberating and intuitive; she had been milliner, clerk, domestic help, and something in a canteen; and P. Stick Repton had, as one commonly says, picked her up at a time when she was drifting about London without a penny in her purse, without even a purse, and he had not yet put her down.

"I can't understand! It's sickening, monstrous!" Lally was fumbling with a match before the penny gas fire, for when it was evening, in September, it always got chilly on a floor so high up. Their flat was a fourth-floor one, and there were—O, fifteen thousand stairs! Out of the window and beyond the chimneys you could see the long glare from lights in High Holborn, and hear the hum of buses. And that was a comfort.

"Lower! Turn it lower!" yelled Philip. The gas had ignited with an astounding thump; the kneeling Lally had thrown up her hands and dropped the matchbox, saying "Damn" in the same tone as one might say "Good morning" to a milkman.

"You shouldn't do it, you know," grumbled Repton. "You'll blow us to the deuce." And that was just like Lally, that was Lally all over, always; the gas, the nobs of

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sugar in his tea, the way she . . . and the, the . . . O dear, dear! In their early life together, begun so abruptly and illicitly six months before, her simple hidden beauties had delighted him by their surprises; they had peered and shone brighter, had waned and recurred; she was less the one star in his universe than a faint galaxy.

This room of theirs was a dingy room, very small but very high. A lanky gas tube swooped from the middle of the ceiling towards the middle of the table-cloth as if burning to discover whether that was pink or saffron or fawn—and it *was* hard to tell—but on perceiving that the cloth, whatever its tint, was disturbingly spangled with dozens of cup stains and several large envelopes, the gas tube, in the violence of its disappointment, contorted itself abruptly, assumed a lateral bend, and put out its tongue of flame at an oleograph of Monna Lisa which hung above the fireplace.

Those envelopes were the torment to Lally; they were the sickening, monstrous manifestations which she could not understand. There were always some of them lying there, or about the room, bulging with manuscripts that no editors—they *couldn't* have perused them—wanted; and so it had come to the desperate point when, as Lally was saying, something had to be done about things. Repton had done all *he* could; he wrote unceasingly, all day, all night, but all his projects insolvently withered, and morning, noon and evening brought his manuscripts back as unwanted as snow in summer. He was depressed and baffled and weary. And there was simply nothing else he could do, nothing in the world. Apart from his own wonderful gift he was useless, Lally knew, and he was being steadily and stupidly murdered by those editors. It was weeks since they had eaten a proper meal. Whenever they obtained any really nice food now, they sat down to it silently, intently and destructively. As far as Lally could tell, there seemed to be no prospect of any such meals again in life or time, and the worst of it all was Philip's pride—he was actually too proud to ask anyone for assistance! Not that he would be too proud to accept help if it were offered to him: O no, if it came he would rejoice at it! But still, he had that nervous, shrinking pride that coiled upon

itself, and he would not ask; he was like a wounded animal that hid its woe far away from the rest of the world. Only Lally knew his need, but why could not other people see it—those villainous editors! His own wants were so modest, and he had a generous mind.

"Phil," Lally said, seating herself at the table. Repton was lolling in a wicker armchair before the gas fire. "I'm not going on waiting and waiting any longer, I must go and get a job. Yes, I must. We get poorer and poorer. We can't go on like it any longer, there's no use, and I can't bear it."

"No, no, I can't have that, my dear . . ."

"But I will!" she cried. "O, why are you so proud?"

"Proud! Proud!" He stared into the gas fire, his tired arms hanging limp over the arms of the chair. "You don't understand. There are things the flesh has to endure, and things the spirit too must endure. . . ." Lally loved to hear him talk like that; and it was just as well, for Repton was much given to such discoursing. Deep in her mind was the conviction that he had simple access to profound, almost unimaginable, wisdom. "It isn't pride, it is just that there is a certain order in life, in my life, that it would not do for. I could not bear it, I could never rest: I can't explain that, but just believe it, Lally." His head was empty but unbowed; he spoke quickly and finished almost angrily. "If only I had money! It's not for myself. I can stand all this, any amount of it. I've done so before, and I shall do again and again, I've no doubt. But I have to think of you."

That was fiercely annoying. Lally got up and went and stood over him.

"Why are you so stupid? I can think for myself and fend for myself. I'm not married to you. You have your pride, but I can't starve for it. And I've a pride, too. I'm a burden to you. If you won't let me work now while we're together, then I must leave you and work for myself."

"Leave! Leave me now? When things are so bad?" His white face gleamed his perturbation up at her. "O well, go, go." But then, mournfully moved, he took her hands and fondled them. "Don't be a fool, Lally; it's only

a passing depression, this; I've known worse before, and it never lasts long; something turns up, always does. There's good and bad in it all, but there's more goodness than anything else. You see."

"I don't want to wait for ever, even for goodness. I don't believe in it, I never see it, never feel it, it is no use to me. I could go and steal, or walk the streets, or do any dirty thing—easily. What's the good of goodness if it isn't any use?"

"But, but," Repton stammered, "what's the use of bad, if it isn't any better?"

"I mean . . ." began Lally.

"You don't mean anything, my dear girl."

"I mean, when you haven't any choice it's no use talking moral, or having pride, it's stupid. O, my darling," she slid down to him and lay against his breast, "it's not you, you are everything to me; that's why it angers me so, this treatment of you, all hard blows and no comfort. It will never be any different, I feel it will never be different now, and it terrifies me."

"Pooh!" Repton kissed her and comforted her: she was his beloved. "When things are wrong with us our fancies take their tone from our misfortunes, badness, evil. I sometimes have a queer stray feeling that one day I shall be hanged. Yes, I don't know what for, what *could* I be hanged for? At other times I have felt sure that one day I shall come to be—what do you think?—Prime Minister of this country. You can't reason against such things. I even made a list of the men I would choose for my Cabinet. Yes, oh yes."

But Lally had made up her mind to leave him; she would leave him for a while and earn her own living. When things took a turn for the better she would join him again. She told him this. She had friends who were going to get her some work.

"But what are you going to do, Lally, I . . ."

"I'm going away to Glasgow," said she.

Glasgow! He had heard things about Glasgow! Good Heavens!

"I've some friends there," the girl went on steadily. She

had got up and was sitting on the arm of his chair. "I wrote to them last week. They can get me a job almost anywhen, and I can stay with them. They want me to go—they've sent the money for my fare. I think I shall have to go."

"You don't love me then!" said the man.

Lally kissed him.

"But *do* you? Tell me!"

"Yes, my dear," said Lally, "of course."

An uneasiness possessed him; he released her moodily. Where was their wild passion flown to? She was staring at him intently, then she tenderly said: "My love, don't you be melancholy, don't take it to heart so. I'd cross the world to find you a pin."

"No, no, you mustn't do that," he exclaimed idiotically. At her indulgent smile he grimly laughed too, and then sank back in his chair. The girl stood up and went about the room doing vague nothings, until he spoke again.

"So you are tired of me?"

Lally went to him steadily and knelt down by his chair. "If I was tired of you, Phil, I'd kill myself."

Moodily he ignored that. "I suppose it had to end like this. But I've loved you desperately." Lally was now weeping on his shoulder, and he began to twirl a lock of her rich brown hair absently with his fingers as if it were a seal on a watch chain. "I'd been thinking we might as well get married as soon as things had turned round."

"I'll come back, Phil," she clasped him so tenderly, "as soon as you want me."

"But you are not really going?"

"Yes," said Lally.

"You're not to go!"

"I wouldn't go if . . . if anything . . . if you had any luck. But as we are now I must go away, to give you a chance. You see that, darling Phil?"

"You're not to go, I object. I just love you, Lally, that's all, and of course I want to keep you here."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I . . . don't . . . know. Things drop out of the sky. But we must be together. You're not to go."

Lally sighed: he was stupid. And Repton began to turn over in his mind the dismal knowledge that she had taken this step in secret, she had not told him while she was trying to get to Glasgow. Now here she was with the fare, and as good as gone! Yes, it was all over.

"When do you propose to go?"

"Not for a few days, nearly a fortnight."

"Good God," he moaned. Yes, it was all over then. He had never dreamed that this would be the end, that she would be the first to break away. He had always envisaged a tender scene in which he could tell her, with dignity and gentle humour, that ... Well, he never had quite hit upon the words he would use, but that was the kind of setting. And now, here she was with her fare to Glasgow, her heart turned towards Glasgow, and she as good as gone to Glasgow! No dignity, no gentle humour—in fact he was enraged, sullen but enraged; he boiled furtively. But he said with mournful calm:

"I've so many misfortunes, I suppose I can bear this too." Gloomy and tragic he was.

"Dear, darling Phil, it's for your own sake I'm going."

Repton sniffed derisively. "We are always mistaken in the reasons for our commonest actions; Nature derides us all. You are sick of me, I can't blame you."

Eulalia was so moved that she could only weep again. Nevertheless she wrote to her friends in Glasgow promising to be with them by a stated date.

Towards the evening of the following day, at a time when she was alone, a letter arrived addressed to herself. It was from a firm of solicitors in Cornhill inviting her to call upon them. A flame leaped up in Lally's heart: it might mean the offer of some work which would keep her in London after all! If only it were so she would accept it on the spot, and Philip would have to be made to see the reasonableness of it. But at the office in Cornhill a more astonishing outcome awaited her. There she showed her letter to a little office boy with scarcely any finger nails and very little nose, and he took it to an elderly man who had a superabundance of both. Smiling affably the long-nosed man led her upstairs into the sombre den of a gentleman

who had some white hair and a lumpy yellow complexion. Having put to her a number of questions relating to her family history, and appearing to be satisfied and not at all surprised by her answers, this gentleman revealed to Lally the overpowering tidings that she was entitled to a legacy of eighty pounds by the will of a forgotten and recently deceased aunt. Subject to certain formalities, proofs of identity, and so forth, he promised Lally the possession of the money within about a week.

Lally's descent to the street, her emergence into the clamouring atmosphere, her walk along to Holborn, were accomplished in a state of blessedness and trance, a trance in which life became a thousand times airily enlarged, movement was a delight, and thought a rapture. She would give all the money to Philip, and if he very much wanted it she would even marry him now. Perhaps, though, she would save ten pounds of it for herself. The other seventy would keep them for . . . it was impossible to say how long it would keep them. They could have a little holiday somewhere in the country together, he was so worn and weary. Perhaps she had better not tell Philip anything at all about it until her lovely money was really in her hand. Nothing in life, at least nothing about money, was ever certain; something horrible might happen at the crucial moment and the money be snatched from her very fingers. O, she would go mad then! So for some days she kept her wonderful secret.

Their imminent separation had given Repton a tender sadness that was very moving. "Eulalia," he would say; for he had suddenly adopted the formal version of her name: "Eulalia, we've had a great time together, a wonderful time, there will never be anything like it again." She often shed tears, but she kept the grand secret still locked in her heart. Indeed, it occurred to her very forcibly that even now his stupid pride might cause him to reject her money altogether. Silly, silly Philip! Of course, it would have been different if they had married; he would naturally have taken it then, and really, it would have *been* his. She would have to think out some dodge to overcome his scruples. Scruples were *such* a nuisance, but

then it was very noble of him: there were not many men who wouldn't take money from a girl they were living with.

Well, a week later she was summoned again to the office in Cornhill and received from the white-haired gentleman a cheque for eighty pounds drawn on the Bank of England to the order of Eulalia Burnes. Miss Burnes desired to cash the cheque straightway, so the large-nosed elderly clerk was deputed to accompany her to the Bank of England close by and assist in procuring the money.

"A very nice errand!" exclaimed that gentleman as they crossed to Threadneedle Street past the Royal Exchange. Miss Burnes smiled her acknowledgment, and he began to tell her of other windfalls that had been disbursed in his time—but vast sums, very great persons—until she began to infer that Blackbean, Carp & Ransome were universal dispensers of heavenly largesse.

"Yes, but," said the clerk, hawking a good deal from an affliction of catarrh, "I never got any myself, and never will. If I did, do you know what I would do with it?" But at that moment they entered the portals of the bank, and in the excitement of the business Miss Burnes forgot to ask the clerk how he would use a legacy, and thus she possibly lost a most valuable slice of knowledge. With one fifty-pound note and six five-pound notes clasped in her handbag she bade good-bye to the long-nosed clerk, who shook her fervently by the hand and assured her that Blackbean, Carp & Ransome would be delighted at all times to undertake any commissions on her behalf. Then she fled along the pavement, blithe as a bird, until she was breathless with her flight. Presently she came opposite the window of a typwriting agency. Tripping airily into its office she laid a scrap of paper before a lovely Hebe who was typing there.

"I want this typed, if you please," said Lally.

The beautiful typist read the words on the scrap of paper and stared at the heiress.

"I don't want any address to appear," said Lally, "just a plain sheet, please."

A few moments later she received a neatly-typed page folded in an envelope, and after paying the charge she hurried off to a District Messenger office. Here she ad-

dressed the envelope in a disguised hand to *P. Stick Repton, Esq.*, at their address in Holborn. She read the typed letter through again:

> Dear Sir,
>
> In common with many others I entertain the greatest admiration for your literary abilities, and I therefore beg you to accept this tangible expression of that admiration from a constant reader of your articles, who, for purely private reasons, desires to remain anonymous.
>
> Your very sincere,
>
> WELLWISHER.

Placing the fifty-pound note upon the letter Lally carefully folded them together and put them both into the envelope. The attendant then gave it to a uniformed lad, who sauntered off whistling very casually, somewhat to Lally's alarm —he looked so small and careless to be entrusted with fifty pounds. Then Lally went out, changed one of her five-pound notes and had a lunch—half-a-crown, but it was worth it. O, how enchanting and exciting London was! In two days more she would have been gone; now she would have to write off at once to her Glasgow friends and tell them she had changed her mind, that she was now settled in London. O, how enchanting and delightful! And to-night he would take her out to dine in some fine restaurant, and they would do a theatre. She did not really want to marry Phil, they had got on so well without it, but if he wanted that too she did not mind—much. They would go away into the country for a whole week. What money would do! Marvellous! And looking round the restaurant she felt sure that no other woman there, no matter how well-dressed, had as much as thirty pounds in her handbag.

Returning home in the afternoon she became conscious of her own betraying radiance; very demure and subdued and usual she would have to be, or he might guess the cause of it. Though she danced up the long flights of stairs she entered their room quietly, but the sight of Repton staring out of the window, forlorn as a drowsy horse, overcame her and she rushed to embrace him crying "Darling!"

"Hullo, hullo," he smiled.

"I'm so fond of you, Phil dear."

"But . . . but you're deserting me!"

"O no," she cried archly, "I'm not—not deserting you."

"All right." Repton shrugged his shoulders, but he seemed happier. He did not mention the fifty pounds then: perhaps it had not come yet—or perhaps he was thinking to surprise her.

"Let's go for a walk, it's a screaming lovely day," said Lally.

"O, I dunno." He yawned and stretched. "Nearly tea-time, isn't it?"

"Well, we . . ." Lally was about to suggest having tea out somewhere, but she bethought herself in time. "I suppose it is. Yes, it is."

So they stayed in for tea. No sooner was tea over than Repton remarked that he had an engagement somewhere. Off he went, leaving Lally disturbed and anxious. Why had he not mentioned the fifty pounds? Surely it had not gone to the wrong address? This suspicion once formed, Lally soon became certain, tragically sure, that she had misaddressed the envelope herself. A conviction that she had put No. 17 instead of No. 71 was almost overpowering, and she fancied that she hadn't even put London on the envelope—but Glasgow. That was impossible, though, but —O the horror!—somebody else was enjoying their fifty pounds. The girl's fears were not allayed by the running visit she paid to the messenger office that evening, for the rash imp who had been entrusted with her letter had gone home and therefore could not be interrogated until the morrow. By now she was sure that he had blundered; he had been so casual with an important letter like that! Lally never did, and never would again, trust any little boys who wore their hats so much on one side, were so glossy with hair-oil, and went about whistling just to madden you. She burned to ask where the boy lived, but in spite of her desperate desire she could not do so. She dared not, it would expose her to . . . to something or other she could only feel, not name; you had to keep cool, to let nothing, not even curiosity, master you.

Hurrying home again, though hurrying was not her custom, and there was no occasion for it, she wrote the letter to her Glasgow friends. Then it crossed her mind that it would be wiser not to post the letter that night; better wait until the morning, after she had discovered what the horrible little messenger had done with her letter. Bed was a poor refuge from her thoughts, but she accepted it, and when Phil came home she was not sleeping. While he undressed he told her of the lecture he had been to, something about Agrarian Depopulation it was, but even after he had stretched himself beside her he did not speak about the fifty pounds. Nothing, not even curiosity, should master her, and so she calmed herself, and in time fitfully slept.

At breakfast next morning he asked her what she was going to do that day.

"O," replied Lally offhandedly, "I've got a lot of things to see to, you know; I must go out. I'm sorry the porridge is so awful this morning, Phil, but . . ."

"Awful?" he broke in. "But it's nicer than usual! Where are you going? I thought—our last day, you know—we might go out somewhere together."

"Dear Phil!" Lovingly she stretched out a hand to be caressed across the table. "But I've several things to do. I'll come back early, eh?" She got up and hurried round to embrace him.

"All right," he said. "Don't be long."

Off went Lally to the messenger office, at first as happy as a bird, but on approaching the building the old tremors assailed her. Inside the room was the cocky little boy who bade her "Good Morning" with laconic assurance. Lally at once questioned him, and when he triumphantly produced a delivery book she grew limp with her suppressed fear, one fear above all others. For a moment she did not want to look at it: Truth hung by a hair, and as long as it so hung she might swear it was a lie. But there it was, written right across the page, an entry of a letter delivered, signed for in the well-known hand, *P. Stick Repton.* There was no more doubt, only a sharp indignant agony, as if she had been stabbed with a dagger of ice.

"O yes, thank you," said Lally calmly. "Did you hand it to him yourself?"

"Yes'm," replied the boy, and he described Philip.

"Did he open the letter?"

"Yes'm."

"There was no answer?"

"No'm."

"All right." Fumbling in her bag, she added: "I think I've got a sixpence for you."

Out in the street again she tremblingly chuckled to herself. "So that is what he is like, after all. Cruel and mean!" He was going to let her go and keep the money in secret to himself! How despicable! Cruel and mean, cruel and mean. She hummed it to herself: "Cruel and mean, cruel and mean!" It eased her tortured bosom. "Cruel and mean!" And he was waiting at home for her, waiting with a smile for their last day together. It would *have* to be their last day. She tore up the letter to her Glasgow friends, for now she *must* go to them. So cruel and mean! Let him wait! A 'bus stopped beside her and she stepped on to it, climbing to the top and sitting there while the air chilled her burning features. The 'bus made a long journey to Plaistow. She knew nothing of Plaistow, she wanted to know nothing of Plaistow, but she did not care where the 'bus took her; she only wanted to keep moving, and moving away, as far away as possible from Holborn and from him, and not once let those hovering tears down fall.

From Plaistow she turned and walked back as far as the Mile End Road. Thereabouts, wherever she went she met clergymen, dozens of them. There must be a conference, about charity or something, Lally thought. With a vague desire to confide her trouble to some one, she observed them; it would relieve the strain. But there was none she could tell her sorrow to, and failing that, when she came to a neat restaurant she entered it and consumed a fish. Just beyond her three sleek parsons were lunching, sleek and pink, bald, affable, consoling men, all very much alike.

"I saw Carter yesterday," she heard one say. Lally liked listening to the conversation of strangers, and she had

often wondered what clergymen talked about among themselves.

"What, Carter! Indeed. Nice fellow, Carter. How was he?"

"Carter loves preaching, you know!" cried the third.

"O yes, he loves preaching!"

"Ha ha ha, yes."

"Ha ha ha, oom."

"Awf'lly good preacher, though."

"Yes, awf'lly good."

"And he's awf'lly good at comic songs, too."

"Yes?"

"Yes!"

Three glasses of water, a crumbling of bread, a silence suggestive of prayer.

"How long has he been married?"

"Twelve years," returned the cleric who had met Carter.

"O, twelve years!"

"I've only been married twelve years myself," said the oldest of them.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I tarried very long."

"Ha ha ha, yes."

"Ha ha ha, oom."

"Er . . . have you any family?"

"No."

Very delicate and dainty in handling their food they were, very delicate and dainty.

"My rectory is a magnificent old house," continued the recently married one. "Built originally 1700. Burnt down. Rebuilt 1784."

"Indeed!"

"Humph!"

"Seventeen bedrooms and two delightful tennis courts."

"O, well done!" the others cried, and then they all fell with genteel gusto upon a pale blanc-mange.

From the restaurant the girl sauntered about for a while, and then there was a cinema wherein, seated warm and comfortable in the twitching darkness, she partially stilled her misery. Some nervous fancy kept her roaming in that

district for most of the evening. She knew that if she left it she would go home, and she did not want to go home. The naphtha lamps of the booths at Mile End were bright and distracting, and the hum of the evening business was good despite the smell. A man was weaving sweetstuffs from a pliant roll of warm toffee that he wrestled with as the athlete wrestles with the python. There were stalls with things of iron, with fruit or fish, pots and pans, leather, string, nails. Watches for use—or for ornament—what d'ye lack? A sailor told naughty stories while selling bunches of green grapes out of barrels of cork dust which he swore he had stolen from the Queen of Honolulu. People clamoured for them both. You could buy back numbers of the comic papers at four a penny, rolls of linoleum for very little more—and use either for the other's purpose.

"At thrippence per foot, mesdames," cried the sweating cheapjack, lashing himself into ecstatic furies, "that's a piece of fabric weft and woven with triple-strength Andalusian jute, double-hot-pressed with rubber from the island of Pagama, and stencilled by an artist as poisoned his grandfather's cook. That's a piece of fabric, mesdames, as the king of heaven himself wouldn't mind to put down in his parlour—if he had the chance. Do I ask thrippence a foot for that piece of fabric? Mesdames, I was never a daring chap."

Lally watched it all; she looked and listened; then looked and did not see, listened and did not hear. Her misery was not the mere disappointment of love, not that kind of misery alone; it was the crushing of an ideal in which love had had its home, a treachery cruel and mean. The sky of night, so smooth, so be-starred, looked wrinkled through her screen of unshed tears; her sorrow was a wild cloud that troubled the moon with darkness.

In miserable desultory wandering she had spent her day, their last day, and now, returning to Holborn in the late evening, she suddenly began to hurry, for a new possibility had come to lighten her dejection. Perhaps, after all, so whimsical he was, he was keeping his "revelation" until the last day, or even the last hour, when (nothing being known to her, as he imagined) all hopes being gone and they had

come to the last kiss, he would take her in his arms and laughingly kill all grief, waving the succour of a flimsy banknote like a flag of triumph. Perhaps even, in fact surely, that was why he wanted to take her out to-day! O, what a blind, wicked, stupid girl she was, and in a perfect frenzy of bubbling faith she panted homewards for his revealing sign.

From the pavement below she could see that their room was lit. Weakly she climbed the stairs and opened the door. Phil was standing up, staring so strangely at her. Helplessly and half-guiltily she began to smile. Without a word said he came quickly to her and crushed her in his arms, her burning silent man, loving and exciting her. Lying against his breast in that constraining embrace, their passionate disaster was gone, her doubts were flown; all perception of the feud was torn from her and deeply drowned in a gulf of bliss. She was aware only of the consoling delight of their reunion, of his amorous kisses, of his tongue tingling the soft down on her upper lip that she disliked and he admired. All the soft wanton endearments that she so loved to hear him speak were singing in her ears, and then he suddenly swung and lifted her up, snapped out the gaslight, and carried her off to bed.

Life that is born of love feeds on love; if the wherewithal be hidden how shall we stay our hunger? The galaxy may grow dim, or the stars drop in a wandering void; you can neither keep them in your hands nor crumble them in your mind.

What was it Phil had once called her? Numskull! After all it was his own fifty pounds, she had given it to him freely, it was his to do as he liked with. A gift was a gift, it was poor spirit to send money to anyone with the covetous expectation that it would return to you. She would surely go to-morrow.

The next morning he awoke her early, and kissed her.

"What time does your train go?" said he.

"Train!" Lally scrambled from his arms and out of bed.

A fine day, a glowing day. A bright sharp air! Quickly she dressed, and went into the other room to prepare their

breakfast. Soon he followed, and they ate silently together, although whenever they were near each other he caressed her tenderly. Afterwards she went into the bedroom and packed her bag; there was nothing more to be done, he was beyond hope. No woman waits to be sacrificed, least of all those who sacrifice themselves with courage and a quiet mind. When she was ready to go she took her portmanteau into the sitting-room; he, too, made to put on his hat and coat.

"No," murmured Lally, "you're not to come with me."

"Pooh, my dear!" he protested, "nonsense."

"I won't have you come," cried Lally with an asperity that impressed him.

"But you can't carry that bag to the station by yourself!"

"I shall take a taxi." She buttoned her gloves.

"My dear!" His humorous deprecation annoyed her.

"O, bosh!" Putting her gloved hands around his neck she kissed him coolly. "Good-bye. Write to me often. Let me know how you thrive, won't you, Phil? And"—a little waveringly—"love me always." She stared queerly at the two dimples in his cheeks; each dimple was a nest of hair that could never be shaved.

"Lally darling, beloved girl! I never loved you more than now, this moment. You are more precious than ever to me."

At that, she knew her moment of sardonic revelation had come—but she dared not use it, she let it go. She could not so deeply humiliate him by revealing her knowledge of his perfidy. A compassionate divinity smiles at our puny sins. She knew his perfidy, but to triumph in it would defeat her own pride. Let him keep his gracious mournful airs to the last, false though they were. It was better to part so, better from such a figure than from an abject scarecrow, even though both were the same inside. And something capriciously reminded her, for a flying moment, of elephants she had seen swaying with the grand movement of tidal water—and groping for monkey-nuts.

Lally tripped down the stairs alone. At the end of the street she turned for a last glance. There he was, high up in the window, waving good-byes. And she waved back at him.

FAITHFUL JENNY DOVE[1]

By ELEANOR FARJEON

(From *Hutchinson's Magazine*)

Alack the day, alack the day
When my truelove went away!
They killed my truelove over sea
And when they killed him they killed me.

I

WHEN Robert Green, my truelove, went to the wars, there was but one ghost in our village of Maltby. Now there are two.

I will tell you. Jenny Dove is my name, and when I was sixteen years old they called me the prettiest girl in Maltby, though that is not for me to say. At all events, Robert Green, my truelove, thought so; but then no doubt there was never a girl with a sweetheart who could not say the same, but then it was not only Robert Green, there were others; though for me there was only Robert. And when we had been plighted three short months, he went to the wars.

But I go a little too fast. I ought first to tell you of the young Squire of Bride's Lane. We could not have told you in Maltby how far back his legend went; for all we knew, he had always been there. Many people had seen him, so they said, but none agreed about his manner of dress—one said he wore a coat of mail, one said he wore a ruff, another a frilled shirt—so there was no judging when he had lived. But all agreed that they had heard him weeping at break of day beside the churchyard gate at the end of the lane by which all the Ladies of Maltby arrive to be married; and as the sun came up and touched him

[1] Copyright, 1925, by Eleanor Farjeon.
From "Faithful Jenny Dove," published by W. Collins and Son, Ltd.

where he leaned against the gate, he sank upon his knees beside it and melted away. For the young Squire was a morning ghost, and that's perhaps why the details of him were hard to swear to—the black night throws them up, but seen in daylight a ghostly ruff or a shirt-frill may be all one. I had never seen the Squire myself, never in my life.

But the day my truelove left me, I rose early and met him, at his request, by the church porch, for he had a fancy to stand at the altar with me and make a vow of constancy, as binding on us both as marriage might be. We would have liked very well to be married, but our mothers would not hear of it, though I wanted but four years, and he but two, of twenty. So he thought of this vow instead; and as I said, "If love itself is not stronger than marriage, Robert, what use is it at all?"

"Yes, Jenny," he said, "marriage lasts only as long as life, but love lasts after death."

I thought this was very true, as well as very poetical. Robert was indeed a poet, and had written me some beautiful lines for Saint Valentine, and also when my linnet died.

Well, as I say, we met in the early morning in the church porch, before anybody was stirring, and as ill-luck would have it the church door was locked. This dashed us very much, and we could not wake the verger who was in charge of the key, because he was my own uncle and much against Robert on account of his age, which indeed he could not help, and time would remedy.

I could only just keep back my tears for disappointment, and Robert looked serious, but was too manly to weep.

"What shall we do?" I asked, relying on his strength and wisdom.

"We will pledge ourselves beside some other cross," he answered, thoughtfully, and glanced over the churchyard with its monuments.

But at this I shuddered. "Oh no! not one of *those!*"

"Then come and stand with me by Eleanor's Cross," said he, and that pleased me better. Just outside the village was one of Queen Eleanor's Crosses, where her coffin had rested, I forget how many hundred years ago. It was

a husband's tribute to a faithful wife, and well suited to our purpose. The quickest way was by the Bride's Lane, and as we crossed the churchyard to leave by that wicket the sun was just rising. On reaching it we both looked up together and said in one breath: I, "Do not weep, Robert!" and he: "Jenny, you must not weep!" But neither of us was weeping in the least, and the sun shone bright into the lane, where Robert and I looked too late to see anything. But we had both heard the weeping. I took it for an omen, if Robert did not, but I said nothing; and we walked down the Bride's Lane to the cross-roads, where Eleanor's Cross stood on a grassy mound. There we took our oath, and what better words could we find than Robert's own?

"Marriage lasts only as long as life, but love lasts after death."

We each repeated these words, and then I added a promise of my own.

"Robert," I said, "until you return to me I will come every morning at daybreak to this cross to watch for you; and here, where we now part, we will meet again."

"My faithful Jenny!" said he, and kissed me tenderly, and then I confess I melted into tears; but he said quickly, "Smile, Jenny, smile! You'll smile when we meet, let me leave you smiling."

So I managed to smile till he was out of sight. It was difficult, but it is wonderful what you can do.

The wars lasted two whole years, and then the soldiers began to come back. During the first year I had had three letters from Robert, my truelove, which were a great comfort to me. In the first one he said, among other things, "How often I think of my faithful Jenny, smiling by Eleanor's Cross as I last saw her. I have begun a ballad about you, or rather, it is put into your mouth, so to say —the first bit goes:

> Alack the day, alack the day
> When my truelove went away!
> If he should die I will not wive
> With any other man alive.

I stood there smiling in the light
The day my truelove went to fight.

but I cannot get any further with it. I would like to put in your white bonnet with the pink rose under the brim, and your pink frock with white frills as I always see you. I think it will come out pretty if I can manage it."

In the second letter he said, "I cannot get on with the ballad, there is so much to do, but no doubt I will finish it one day."

In the third letter, which began, "My faithful, smiling Jenny, Do you still go every morning to the Cross?" he did not speak of the ballad.

Of course, I told him I did so, rain or fine, wind, sleet or snow, and all the village knew of it, and sometimes one or another who was out even came by to watch me, and the lads and girls teased me, though not unkindly, but my mother called me a silly. He did not answer this letter at all.

Then there was peace, and the men began to come home, but not all of them of course, and news took a long time coming, so there was much anxiety first, even when joy and not grief was to follow. But it is very strange how much hope there can be with anxiety, and every morning, when I went to sit by the Cross, I was quite sure it was the day I would see Robert, my truelove, come home from the wars. And every day when I came away, in spite of my heavy heart, I felt that there was always to-morrow to wait for.

And so another year went by.

Long before it was over they began to come and talk to me, sometimes kind and sometimes scolding. My mother said I was a fool to be wasting my chances, the girls told me to give it up, some of the boys came wooing on their own, and even my best friend, Mary Poole, talked gravely to me.

"Jenny," said she, "the war's been over for a year and all the men that we know of are home again, and for a whole year before that even Robert's mother had no news of him. Jenny, you cannot go on waiting by the Cross all your life."

"Oh, Mary!" I said, "I promised I would."

"How long had you and Robert loved each other?" said she. "Scarcely three months—and how old are you now? Only nineteen. Why you may live another sixty years!"

"That would be a long marriage," I said, "but not very long for love. Oh, Mary!" I said to her, "you do not know what true love is."

"I do, Jenny," said she.

"Who is it?" I asked.

But she was silent.

"And can you, then, Mary," I said, "bid me not to go to the Cross?"

She bent her head and went away without answering.

Then my mother went to his mother, and his mother came to me.

"Jenny," said she, "you're a good faithful girl, as so pretty a girl need seldom be. I'll own I mistrusted you when you were younger, for looks like yours might catch a lord. But I'll say now, if Robert came home I'd give him to you with my blessing. But he won't come home, Jenny, and I'll give you my blessing the day you go to church with another."

"I'll wait to go there with Robert," I said.

Then, for a little, they left me in peace.

Just a year after the ending of the wars, I went to the Cross as usual. It was a lovely spring morning, and the larks were going up, and the grass round Eleanor's Cross was blue with speedwell, and it was easy to be full of hope; so when, as I sat there, a soldier came limping up the empty road, it did not surprise me in the least. I sprang up and looked towards him, smiling with all my heart. But it was not Robert, my truelove.

He was a much older man, about thirty years old, greatly hurt by the wars, as well as lame. He came very slowly to the Cross and stood before me, looking me up and down. I waited for him to speak, but the words seemed hard to him.

"So you're here then, missy," he said at last.

"Yes," I said.

"Jenny Dove, are ye?"

I said, "Yes," again.

"I've a message for ye," he said.
"Tell it to me," I said.
" 'Tis written," he said.
"Oh, is it a letter?" I said.
"Nay," he said, " 'tis the end of a song."
Then he handed me an old bit of paper, very soiled, and on it was written these four lines:

Alack the day, alack the day
When my truelove went away!
They killed my truelove over sea
And when they killed him they killed me.

The writing was very bad, but it was my Robert's.
So I smiled at the lame soldier in the light.
On my stone in the churchyard they have cut the words

JENNY DOVE
WHO DIED OF LOVE.

II

The morning after my burial, I rose early as usual. During my short illness I had been obliged to miss a few sunrises at Eleanor's Cross; it could not be helped. But after this I did not miss one; or yes, just one—and even then, in a way, I did not; but that will come later.

It was scarcely a week since I had met the lame soldier by the Cross, and if any morning could have been lovelier than that one, this was. I was in good time, so I took the long way over the Glebe Farm and through the village. The Glebe meadows were full of flowers. It is a beautiful thing to walk through flowers. No, I do not mean to walk among them, but to walk through them. They pass through your feet, and for a moment your feet and the flowers are one. Some of their sweetness is left in your feet from the daisies and primroses, and if your steps are happy some of your joy remains with the flowers. In the copse I found a bed of violets, and lay on it so that I was

filled from top to toe. I found it was so with all things. Trees and hedges and houses can all be a part of you, indeed, wherever you are, you are for one moment the thing you pass through; nothing is lovelier than a bird flying through your heart.

It was the same with people. You could be closer to them than when you were alive. It was a pleasure to run among the school children as they came out of school. I walked with my friends when they did not know it, and every day I sat in the same chair with my mother. If a person is sad you can carry a shadow away from her heart as you pass through her, and if you are happy you can leave your own light there.

In buildings, too, and things that grow, you feel whatever life has left there. I always knew when joy or pain had filled the hands that laid the stones and raised the rafters, what the lives had been of those they sheltered afterwards; I always knew where men had quarrelled in the market, and where lovers had met in the woods. But now and then as I went about I lit upon something I could not understand—something sweeter than joy, that had been left beneath a tree or in a flower. If it was a fancy, it seemed finer than any that comes from the bodies of things and creatures. Whenever I discovered it my spirit grew twice as happy as it had been, yet who or what had left it there I could not think.

I was glad to be a morning-ghost, for it was only during my short watch by the Cross that I could be seen, and then not by everybody; after that I was free for the day, and not visible at all, so that I could go where I pleased and startle no one. The night-ghosts are less fortunate, for, as I once said, the dark shows them up so, and it is a sad thing to be feared. Besides, for some reason which I do not know, most of the night-ghosts have sorrows. I had none. My only duty was to sit for half an hour in the morning by the Cross, smiling as the sun came up. This was all due to Robert, my truelove. Thanks to him I was a smiling ghost. None of us can escape a little duty, and mine could not have been lighter. Early as it was, a wagoner passed sometimes, and in the fine weather, if I

looked down the west road, I would often see Mary Poole crossing the pastures to turn out the cows. Many ghosts long for nothing but to be laid, but I did not wish to be; why should I? I had never while I lived had such delight in the world. I knew that had I died and Robert lived, I should have haunted the Cross only till he came home, and then I should have rested quiet in my grave. But now that could not happen, for Robert was dead, and I would always haunt the Cross. I took to saying the little verse the soldier gave me every morning as the sun rose. I had little enough to do and it seemed in keeping to repeat it:

Alack the day, alack the day
When my truelove went away!
They killed my truelove over sea
And when they killed him they killed me.

Besides it was quite true. But I never stopped smiling as I said it. Many of the villagers said they had seen me, and one or two of them really had. And Mary Poole once heard me. I found her standing by the Cross one morning when I arrived. She was looking up the road and did not see me, so I sat down behind her, and when the sun came up I said my piece. She turned and looked at me, and grew pale, and said nothing. So I sat smiling at her till it was time to fade.

The only thing was that sometimes I felt lonely. You would think this could not be, seeing that at any moment I could become a part of a beech tree, or a young lamb, or a crop of barley, or the busy road, or Gaffer Vine's warm chimney corner. Still, it was so. I would have been glad of someone to talk to.

One morning in July I was a little late. I cannot think how I came to oversleep myself, but when I stood beside my headstone plaiting my hair, I saw by the sky that I would not have time to go by the Glebe and the village, where I loved to pass through the rooms of my sleeping friends. So I ran as quickly as I could to the little wicket that opened on the Bride's Lane, a way I had not taken since I died. As I hurried down the lane I saw the young

Squire hurrying up it. It is a funny thing, but I had quite forgotten him till now.

They are all wrong about his dress. He wears a green jerkin, and his face is most beautiful. He is twenty years old.

When he saw me coming he waved his hand, and cried:

"Jenny Dove, who died for love?"

"Yes, young Squire," I said, "but I am in such haste—please do not keep me now."

"Ah, Jenny, thou'rt a young ghost yet!" said he. "How could I keep thee? Pass, child, pass—but meet me at seven in the Withybed."

So we ran straight through each other—but oh, dear, the confusion of it! I never felt anything like it. For when you mingle with a solid body it is different; you seem to become a part of that thing, rather than it becomes a part of you. But when you mingle with a ghost like yourself, there is no telling which is which. For an instant I felt quite lost, I did not know where or who I was, or if what I had been would ever come out of that wilderness. And when I'd slipped through, I was indeed not certain how much of me was left behind, and how much of him I had carried away. I was only just in time at the Cross that morning, and the half-hour went very slowly.

When it was over, I went back to the churchyard to watch the clock, and at last it wanted but fifteen minutes to seven. So I thought I would go to the Withybed and finish waiting there, and I did, and as I reached it saw the young Squire coming too; we were both ahead of time.

We sat down together in the willow-herb and looked at each other.

"Pretty Jenny," said he, "I have not seen thee these three months, not once since they laid thee in thy green grave. But I have heard of thee, and often found thy traces in the fields and the spinneys."

"Do *I* leave traces, young Squire?" I asked.

"Wherever thou goest," he answered.

"And do you, too?"

"I too, wherever I go. Why Jenny, what dost thou think? That bodies can leave their signs, and spirits can-

not? Ah, Jenny, there's a spirit in the spirit leaves, the sign of angels on the earth—or of fallen angels."

I considered this for a while, and then a thought struck me. "Please move a little, young Squire," I said.

He did so, and I instantly sat where he had sat. In the willow-herb, whose rosy sprays had stood within his heart, I recognized the lovely trace which had so puzzled and delighted me wherever I had found it.

"*You* do not leave the sign of fallen angels," I said, and held my hand out to him, smiling. He laid his own on it, and I could not tell which was which.

"Jenny," said he, "these three months I have found thy smiles left wherever the spring was sweetest, and I have tried to find thee all day long. For day-ghosts are rare, and I have had five hundred lonely years. I knew it was thy task to smile at dawn by Eleanor's Cross; but unfortunately I must weep by the Bride's Wicket at precisely the same hour, and hasten to the Cross as I might at the end of my task, thou wert always gone. Let us not lose each other again, Jenny."

I told him we would not, and we agreed to meet in the Withybed each day at seven. It promised great happiness for both of us.

So ten years passed by, and we were as happy as we thought to be. For if one alone can take joy in the world's beauty, how much more can two together? And the joy was not of the living, who fears death to-morrow, the joy was endless, that fear was not for us.

Ghosts, I must tell you, seldom ask questions. What was, matters so little; what is, so much; only our small daily tasks bound us for a few minutes to the lives we had left, and when those were finished we had no cares for our own, or curiosity for the other's, past. Our working hours being the same, just what each did was never seen by the other, and, as I say, we were not curious to ask.

However, a few years after our first meeting, it happened one Sunday that we went to church together, for it was the day I had died, and I wished to sit with my mother in her pew. And when the service was ended, and the church empty, we wandered through it looking at this and that,

and by the old tomb, where the Crusader and his Lady lie, the young Squire halted, looking very kindly on the almost faceless figures. Suddenly he laughed.

"Jenny," he said, "lie there upon my Lady's effigy."

So I did as he asked, enveloping the stone form with my own, and felt strangely as he stood over me, looking down at me with the look I loved most.

"Yes," he said, "thou art fairer than she was."

"Oh, did you know her?" I asked.

"I died for love for her," he said. "I was Squire in her father's house, and we loved in secret, and my love was my passion, but hers was her pleasure. Then this knight came back from the East, and wooed her, and she was willing; and she summoned me to one last meeting, and as she lay in my arms told me with light words that this was the end. And I cried out that there might be an end to a woman's love, but there was none to her faithlessness, and left her. And the day she was to be married I sat and wept beside the wicket through which she must pass, and as the sun came up I swore to haunt that spot until one woman should prove faithful; and then I slew myself, where she and this knight found me later on. Cannot our pain make fools of us, Jenny? And so we die for love, which we should live for." He smiled at me, and we went out of the church together; and as we crossed the graveyard he stopped beside my grave, and read the stone.

"You also died for love," said the young Squire. "To whom were *you* faithless, Jenny Dove?"

Oh, do you know how a shadow crosses a sunny field? Would you think such a shadow could fall on a smiling ghost, as I was? Yet it did. All of a sudden I feared to tell the young Squire my story; I feared to tell him I was faithful to Robert Green, my truelove, killed in the wars. For then, you see——

I hung my head.

My young Squire laughed at me, and said, as he often did, "Oh, Jenny, thou'rt a young ghost yet! So young, thou canst still feel shame; and I'm so old that I can no longer feel bitterness. Smile, Jenny, smile!"

But if you will believe me, when he said this the tears ran down my face, and he looked at me in surprise, for he had never seen me weep before. Then suddenly he gaily laughed again, and ran in on me and stood over me and surrounded me so that once more I did not know myself from him, or my tears from his laughter but in that wonderful confusion I heard his voice, merry, sweet, and teasing:

"Pretty Jenny! Smiling Jenny! Faithless Jenny!" he said, did my young Squire.

When I heard him call me "faithless," I laughed too, and ran out of him, and he after me. It was a great game, the chase, the slipping through, the capture that could be no capture unless I wished—until such time as I did wish and stood quite still. We played that game often after this. And often he teased me for my story, and asked me what I did by Eleanor's Cross, and for what sin to love I was condemned to smile—he teased me for the pleasure of making me hang my head. But I did not weep again; why need I, seeing I had resolved never to tell him my story?

Then the tenth year passed by, and I went on a spring morning to Eleanor's Cross and sat and watched the road. And just before the sun came up, along the road, as it might have been ten years ago, came a limping soldier, of thirty years old. But this time it was Robert Green, my truelove, home from the war.

III

As soon as he saw me he cried, "Jenny! Jenny! Faithful Jenny!" and came limping to the Cross. He held out his trembling hands that seemed afraid to touch me.

"Jenny, to find you here!" he said. "My Jenny, you have not changed a hair—but you're prettier, surely! And see, 'tis the pink gown and the white bonnet, as of old! and see, you're smiling still! To find you here where I left you, smiling still!" He buried his face in his hands. "Oh, say a word to me, my love," he sobbed.

But I could not speak.

He mastered himself and looked at me earnestly.

"Jenny, I've startled ye," he said. "Yes, thoughtless that I am. You believed me dead, because I was so long a-coming—and maybe you had my message that I wrote on the battlefield when I truly thought I was dying, and gave my wounded comrade to bring to you, if he should be luckier than me. Did you have it, Jenny?"

I nodded.

"My little love! it might have broken your heart."

"It did, Robert." They were my first words to him.

"Oh, cruel—but I'll mend it for ye, Jenny. But do not look at me so strange, see, it is myself in very faith, feel this hand, Jenny, indeed I am no ghost."

"But I am, Robert."

He looked at me as though he did not understand, then opened his arms and flung them about me, and then, poor man, he threw himself upon the ground by Eleanor's Cross, with his face in the grass.

The sun came up just then, so I said my lines.

He lifted his face from the grass. "God help me!" said Robert Green, my truelove.

"Robert," I said, "do not grieve so, there is less to grieve for than you might fancy."

"Yes, that's true," said he, "for do you remember our vow: 'Marriage lasts only as long as life, but love lasts after death.' I need not ask ye if ye remember it, my pretty love; have ye not kept faith after death itself? Ah, Jenny, if ever a woman was faithful, it's you!"

As he said these words the shadow fell upon me, the shadow I had felt five years ago. Suddenly it seemed to me that I could smile no more. And, looking over Robert's head where he knelt in the grass at my feet, trying, poor soul, to kiss them, I saw the young Squire standing with sorrow in his eyes.

"Alas!" I cried, "what has brought you here now, when you should be at your weeping?"

"Jenny," said the Young Squire, "when I came up the Bride's Lane this morning, I felt I had no cause to weep; I leaned on the wicket, and no tears came; I could not

understand it; I ran to find thee—and how do I find thee! See, with thy truelove at thy feet, praising thee as the only faithful woman among women? Ah, Jenny, how hast thou deceived me! God help me, I fear I am laid!"

He turned and fled away, and oh, if a ghost's heart could have cracked, mine would have then.

But Robert, who had not heard him, but only my question—love giving him eyes and ears for me, which no others had, yet giving him none for other ghosts than me—Robert, with worshipping eyes also answered me.

"What brings me here but you?" he said. "And as for weeping, I'll be at that no more. See, Jenny, death need matter nothing to us; I'll keep troth with you by the Cross each morning till I die. Even if I may not touch you, I can see and speak with you, and that half-hour of Love's sweet looks and words will carry me through each day. Smile, Jenny, smile, for love lasts after death!"

But I could not smile, for even for him I saw no happiness.

"Dear Robert," I said gently, "that's a vain dream. Have you forgotten to what I pledged myself when thirteen years ago we parted here? I vowed to watch each dawn beside the Cross till you returned again. Your death and my death could not break my vow—but see, my dear, you have returned and I shall watch no more. God help me!" I sighed, "I fear—I fear I am laid."

"Jenny! You will not leave me—you will come again!"

"It will not be in my power, Robert," I said. "In a few minutes this, my last watch, will be ended, and I must go."

"Is there no hope?" cried Robert. "Of what use was it to come home to you, only to lose you? Oh, Jenny, is there no way?"

I thought and thought; and then, at the end of the west road, I saw Mary Poole passing to turn out the cows. Robert's back was towards her and she went without his seeing her. I thought suddenly there might be hope.

"Dear Robert," I said, "my time's short—promise me one last thing."

"Anything, Jenny!"

"Do not show yourself in the village to-day—let no one know you're home until to-morrow. And come at daybreak to the Cross again."

"Will you be here?" he asked.

"I'll try to be," I said—and then I faded.

Next morning, to my joy, I rose as usual. I knew I was being given one more chance. I dressed my hair my prettiest, and pulled out my frills, and tucked the rose under my bonnet-brim just where it showed its best. Then, full of hope, I sped, not to Eleanor's Cross, but to Mary Poole's bedroom.

She was still asleep. I saw how tired and sad she looked, and older than her thirty years. Oh, dear, dear me! I sat down by her mirror, and pulled the little curls round my ears, and tied my sash again. Then I waked her. She did not know why she waked, or why she rose, and dressed herself, not in her old print, but her white lawn. She did not know why she stopped to gather six sweet violets and one dewy leaf from the bed by the path where they grew blue each spring. She did not know why, when she came to the end of the west road, instead of going straight across to the pastures, she turned up to Eleanor's Cross. But she knew—she knew who it was that waited there. She knew as well as I.

"Robert!" she cried, and went as white as a ghost.

He looked up quickly, but quicker still I had entered Mary Poole, who was my best friend, and stayed there, looking my prettiest and kindest at him.

"Mary!" he stammered—"I thought it would be Jenny."

Her eyes filled with tears, and she said, "Our Jenny died."

He came to her and took her hand. Oh, then I looked at Robert Green, my truelove, with all my love, through Mary's tears. She never would have looked so, had she known it. Suddenly, Robert took her in his arms and kissed her. How could he help it?

I did not wait to see more—this was the one day I spoke of, when I left my task undone. I ran as fast as I could up the Bride's Lane, and there, oh, joy! was my young Squire by the wicket, weeping his heart out.

He had just finished as I came up.

"Jenny-all-smiles!" he cried, "why art thou smiling so? Tell me, why am I here and not resting in my grave? And why art not thou?"

"Oh, Young Squire," I said, "how can I rest in my grave when Robert Green, my truelove, is false to me? And how can you in yours, when I am false to him?"

I heard him say, "Pretty Jenny! Smiling Jenny! Faithless Jenny!" and then began the game of catch.

Mary and Robert have six children and a little farm. It is a happy life. Sometimes they come of a morning to chat with me during my watch, where I've nothing to do till the sun comes up.

We all have our duties, and none could be lighter than mine. Then I am free to go to the Withybed.

It is a happy life.

MISS WICKERS[1]

By VIOLA GARVIN

(From *The London Mercury*)

I

"To those who seek, how good,
But what to those who find?"

MISS WICKERS lived in William Street. She had carried on her work there for over thirty years, since her mother had died in the old home at Upper Tooting. The sewing machine hummed steadily from seven in the morning till long after the gas had been turned on at night.

The sun seldom penetrated into William Street, and when there was a fog it always seemed to be at its worst outside Miss Wickers' front door. In that part of the world darkness was for ever covering the earth and a mist the people. One end of the road gave on to an overcrowded cemetery, while the other was cornered by an undertaker's shop with memorial crosses, the information in the window "Pinking done here" and a miniature and exemplary coffin which was a source of rapture to the childhood of the locality.

Each blistered front door in William Street was approached by a long flight of neglected hollow steps frequented by milk cans and cats and on rainy days an aspidistra accompanied the milk can; it was the only thing in William Street that ever had a bath.

Now and again an impatient knocker or the voice of the cats' meat man broke the silence, and on Wednesdays an organ grinder reaped sufficient harvest to return year after year with unaltered numbers.

Funerals often took a short, if slow, cut through William Street; there was always the distraction of trying to see

[1] Copyright, 1925, by Viola Garvin.

into the coaches behind the black curtains to discover if the mourners really cared and judge of their station in life by the value of the wreaths on their knees.

Miss Wickers lived on the ground floor of number nine. The rooms overhead were occupied by one Mrs. Pincent, a chemist's widow from Kilburn. Mrs. Pincent habitually took a drop too much, but her late husband had imparted not a little of his medical knowledge to his derelict who had more than once in crisis proved herself very useful to the neighborhood.

Miss Wickers was thin, blonde, perennially cheerful, abstractedly dressed in her clients' cast-off clothes. If it was cold, she probably wore white muslin and old sand shoes. If it was hot, she would most likely be dressed in a maroon velvet, trimmed with rabbit.

If it rained she carried a parasol with a tattered frill and if the sun shone she would not forget an ancient umbrella with a thousand eyes.

She had never thought of marriage and marriage had never thought of her.

Below her belt, her figure had that Gothic tilt which lifted her skirt in a manner that might have been almost scandalous, had it not been for the bronze medal at her side which safely proclaimed her a member of the Guild of St. Agnes.

She renovated, "did up," made mantles for housekeepers out of old shiny pieces of black satin decorated with bugles, and blouses for ladies in Bayswater Boarding Houses; she mended the silk underclothing of a rich old gentleman who lived in the Albany, worked for the Church and now and again knelt at the foot of the "stand" to turn up the hem of a cassock.

Her fitting room was arranged like a West End firm for which Miss Wickers had once worked for a short time.

A cook's Sunday bolero was flung carelessly on a broken settle beside a nurse's uniform; a ball dress for a subscription Cinderella at Putney was arranged to advantage on the back of a chair with an opera coat Miss Wickers was lining for a lady who had once been on the stage.

There was no time to clean the dim brass crucifix on the

damp red plush bracket over the High Church calendar pricked with patterns of coloured velveteen, nor to dust the photograph of the Reverend Father Mole, the Rector of the Good Shepherd with his hand on the shoulder of the youngest member of the Sunday School.

Day after day, in a whiff of kipper and paraffin Miss Wickers would emerge from the back kitchen, her mouth full of pins, to welcome the clients in the front parlour.

The cat who had slept there all night would spring off the settle and Miss Wickers would examine the window that was never opened to make quite certain that not a breath of air forced itself between the brown paper securities.

Her recreation was to go on Saturdays to sew again for the Guild of St. Agnes, and on Sundays at the Church of the Good Shepherd there was what Miss Wickers called a "coral" celebration.

Mrs. Tring, an ardent Catholic for whom Miss Wickers occasionally did a little millinery, often tried to lure her into the Roman fold; evading all controversy, Miss Wickers gently assured her employer how she found every spiritual satisfaction in the Church of the Good Shepherd and the directorship of Father Mole. In the evening, when the Angelus rang from the belfry hard by, she would often be too busy to obey the summons of the first triple strokes, but when the last bell swung violently to and fro with its cataract of sound, she never neglected to breathe "Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts"; and it seemed to her that the bell poured forth grace over that particular corner of London, over the cemetery, the underground railway, the newspaper shop where you could buy sweets, and William Street.

II

The Reverend Father Mole, Rector of the Good Shepherd, was a big man with rugged features hewn in a flabby, earth-coloured face.

His large head was unprepossessing but not insignificant.

Though an extreme ritualist he was no ascetic; a man of appetite and a difficult abstainer. He drank wine with

a smacking of the lips and it was hard to recognise the sign of grace in the hasty scratch over his corpulence with which he preceded his much desired meal.

Married to a little woman who looked like something grown in the dark, he was poor, but out of a frugal stipend gave liberally to those poorer than himself.

There were buttons missing from his cassock and carelessly eaten meals had left traces on the ecclesiastical girdle.

On the altar steps, covered with the symbolical vestments of his faith, his clumsy boots would often have been better for a cleaning.

He was an indefatigable worker, universally popular with the poor and the lower middle class, the small tradespeople of his extensive parish; far more popular than Father Willett who had private means and an Oxford voice and was forever praying before the winking red lamp in the sanctuary and organising Nativity plays in the Parish Hall.

Father Mole often seemed, if not actually callous, devoid of tact and indifferent to the feelings of others.

In the shabby little study, smelling of apples in cupboards and stale tobacco, he had interview after interview with members of his flock, striding over their complaints and appeals with those muddy boots.

The ruder he was, the more popular he was.

He would go up to strange youths and accost them, accuse them of dark sins and soon they would be staggering under the weight of processional banners on Sundays.

He would turn into some humble house to have a cup of tea with some weary parishioner who would say, "I am feeling a hundred" and he would answer in a roar, "You look it, Mrs. Jones." And he would be pressed to come again.

Little gifts would find their way round to the Rectory—a bulbous bottle of Australian wine, six new-laid eggs from a thrifty back yard, a cake, a pot of home-made marmalade, and towards the summer there would frequently be an anonymous envelope in the offertory with something "for the Rector's holiday."

Miss Wickers usually went to tea with Father Mole before Vespers on Sunday. She would have liked to see him

alone but the lady who cleaned the brasses was generally there or the organist or the thick-haired young barber who carried the processional cross. There was never anything of sufficient importance in Miss Wickers' life to demand the desired tête-à-tête. In the confessional, she would never have stepped over the barrier of official routine. And her confessions were like the weekly round of tunes on the barrel organ each Wednesday.

One winter, there was to be a wedding in the parish. A Sunday School teacher was to marry a tax collector and Miss Wickers was entrusted with the bridesmaids' dresses.

As a rule Mrs. Pincent was engaged to help with a wedding or mourning order, but that particular Christmas had been altogether too much for her, so Doris was engaged instead.

Doris lived with a friend called Mildred in the less romantic purlieus of Chelsea. She was a tall, deep-chested, clear-complexioned, good-looking girl of twenty, with broad shoulders for her slender hips. She was much influenced by the cinema and wore her hair tortured into dusty sausage curls and a celluloid bangle above the elbow into which she sometimes tucked a bunch of violets.

Unlike most apprentices whose work has to be undone as soon as it is completed, Doris proved herself so quick and useful that she remained on long after the wedding was over.

As the sooty lilacs pushed their coloured way between the dilapidated tombs in the cemetery, No. 9 grew decidedly brighter.

Ernie, the undertaker's assistant, used to come round in the evening. Soon he made himself indispensable. If there happened to be a ball dress to be pinked he would run round to the undertaker's with it, or he would do up and take large, brown paper parcels to their destination for Miss Wickers.

"How he does study me," said Miss Wickers, touched by these manifold attentions.

Ernie also studied himself and if he did dash out to get something nice for supper it is to be noted that he shared it.

He was a slim, very fair young man with weak, obstinate,

clear-cut features and he would often come in straight from a funeral in his rich black.

It was then Doris admired him most. It was then she would tell Miss Wickers—"It's a splendid thing to be in the undertaking line. You see nothing else is quite like it. It's so certain, as people must die—though, of course, there's not always the February and March rush of work. February carries them off. Ernie seems to get on so well. He's so quiet spoken and looks so gentlemanly-like walking by the hearse. Not that he is proud; many is the time I have seen him polishing a coffin."

Once, through silent, deserted streets blackened and shaken by the Underground, Ernie and Doris accompanied Miss Wickers to evensong. But Ernie did not much care about it; if he was to have shop out of hours he preferred to wander with Doris amongst the untended graves in the cemetery.

Miss Crawford, who gave music lessons next door, would come in and play them a piece on the piano. She would play "Forget-me-not" or a lively air called "Off to the Woods."

And when she played "Off to the Woods" she smiled, tossed her head and her hands sprang up to the level of her eyebrows and then dropped languorously to her side.

One thought of primroses, leaping dogs and spirited riders. And then they all sat down to cold meat and cups of tea.

III

Towards the end of September it was very quiet again in William Street. Doris seemed suddenly to fail. She had no energy and the bright needle that used to dart like a dragon fly now moved heavily like a bumble bee, while the juvenile curls hung draggled and lifeless round the wan face of a sick woman. Ernie was away on his holiday and Miss Crawford was staying with a pupil at Worthing. Miss Wickers spoke to Mrs. Pincent as to Doris's changed appearance. Mrs. Pincent was unsympathetic but non-committal in spite of a strong temptation to be otherwise. Her late husband had taught her that discretion is often

needed in the profession of which he had always considered himself to be something of a humble adherer.

So Miss Wickers dived into the cracked jug in which she kept her earnings and sent Doris to Brighton.

Doris returned looking rather worse than when she left and with a petulant ailment for every hour of the day. She complained constantly of feeling chilly.

Miss Wickers had a certain check coat which had been given to her by the wife of a journalist. This coat she cherished, as it was a great protection against various evils. It was, literally, a "cache-misère." She would often throw it over a toilette she sometimes felt vaguely to be an unconventional one and she would thus be spared the loud mirth of the emptying school.

She remembered Father Willett's sermon the previous autumn—a sermon on St. Martin—and the vivid picture of the saint dividing his cloak in the snow to clothe a beggar. So, reluctantly, not wholly a cheerful giver as was her wont, Miss Wickers handed over the check coat to Doris.

No historic beggar ever needed that coat more than Doris. In fact, Doris and the check coat were seldom parted.

In the easy chair that was not really easy, but only a shade less penitential than the wooden stool on which Miss Wickers sat bolt upright, Doris would sit huddled up in the check coat.

Miss Wickers would say "Won't you take your coat off, Doris? You'll not feel the good of it when you go out." And Doris would reply—"I feel that chilly, that all-overish, I think I'll keep it on, Miss Wickers."

One day after Christmas, Doris, who was perpetually hungry, had dropped in and was sharing some cold dinner when she suddenly turned livid and sprang to her feet with her hand to her back.

Miss Wickers was alarmed, but there was a seasonal explanation, and she remembered what she had considered at the time, an unwise helping of plum pudding on Doris's plate.

"It's the Christmas pudding," she said, and administered

some drops of peppermint sprinkled on a lump of sugar.

But after a space the pain recurred and with such redoubled violency that Miss Wickers rushed upstairs to fetch the experience of Mrs. Pincent.

"Come quickly," cried Miss Wickers. "I think Doris is dying."

Mrs. Pincent, who was stewing senna pods on a gas ring, flew downstairs after Miss Wickers.

One glance and Mrs. Pincent knew that Doris's hour had come and that she was in the relentless clutch of no death agony but of a life agony.

The pharmacy in Kilburn had not been conducive to a refinement of the vocabulary. In words more simple than considerate to the solitary state to which it had pleased Providence to call Miss Wickers, Mrs. Pincent explained what had excited the whole of William Street for several months.

"Pop the kettle on for a cup of tea," she said to Miss Wickers, "you'll need it before you have done."

Mrs. Pincent was in her element. As she fastened the table-cloth round her waist as an impromptu apron, it was easy to see it was not the first time that she had assisted at such a scene.

Indeed, though childless, she was known to allude to herself humourously as "the mother of many." Faithful to the profession, she murmured something topical as to the doctor. Not that any doctor was necessary when she was present.

There are other things than time and tide that wait for no man—or woman either.

Between them they got Doris on to a slippery horse-hair couch and in spite of inadequate light, space, skill and appliance before another hour had gone by the population of William Street was enriched by a singularly frightful and minute member of the opposite sex. The newcomer was roughly but not unkindly handled by Mrs. Pincent, whom, owing to the irregularity of introduction, she alluded to as "It."

In William Street, a baby who arrived properly and ceremoniously, was always alluded to as "A Little Baby."

Even Miss Wickers' aspen virginity had never been alarmed at the arrival of "A Little Baby."—"Mrs. Jones had a Little Baby last night. I must go round and enquire." Somehow the "Little Baby" made it all right—hastily covering up all manner of shy mysteries.

But this terrifying individual, wriggling like a red worm, all lungs, nose, long black hair, hastily wrapped in one of Miss Wickers' pink flannelette camisoles was not "A Little Baby." Mrs. Pincent slapped it vigorously on the back. "It will never live," she said, looking at a new and white Doris, beautified, exhausted, amongst the damp and tumbled curls. "It will never live, and a good job, too."

It was these words that woke Miss Wickers from the ineffectual stupour that follows shock. She stopped pulling aimlessly at the neck of her old blouse and pulled herself together. Her rickety body had gone totally to bits.

Now, through perspiring clouds of terror and bewilderment that word from the mouth of experience that "It" might not live, that "It" might at any moment depart from this life with which "It" had had so brief and inclement an encounter, penetrated to Miss Wickers' befogged intelligence.

She forgot Doris, she forgot Ernie, and most wholly did she forget herself. She forgot how very much she wished that the back kitchen could have been rapidly transformed by some magician into the professional ward of a hospital, with deft sisters for whom this cataclysm was a daily occurrence.

Miss Wickers remembered the value and destiny of the soul. She remembered certain words she had frequently read in her manual of devotion, how, if it was not possible to find a priest in time that any one may, or should, baptise.

She knew, of course, that Mrs. Pincent would have no kind or sort of sympathy with her. A christening to Mrs. Pincent meant ten shillings dropped at the baker's and a white sugar cake with a cradle on top and "Welcome, Little Stranger" in silver comfits. Here Miss Wickers was as much in her element as Mrs. Pincent had lately been in hers and Miss Wickers was as profoundly indifferent and unem-

barrassed by Mrs. Pincent's spiritual indifference as Mrs. Pincent had been unconcerned by Miss Wickers' first encounter with the brutal facts of creation.

Miss Wickers poured a little warm water out of the teakettle into a cup. But what should she name this unknown quantity that lifted up its voice ceaselessly in a breathless cadence from Mrs. Pincent's lap? What should she call this stranger, this more than stranger within her gates? She consulted the Church Calendar and discovered that ten years had not passed in the last hour and that it was December the 28th, the Feast of St. Stephen, the day on which Good King Wenceslas looked out.

Miss Wickers made an effort to collect herself, to feel herself in a condition fitting the solemnity of the occasion. She could not get over the numbness of her late shock, yet obscurely but well directed by a spirit of hospitality, Miss Wickers poured the warm water dogmatically on the wrinkled forehead of the uninvited guest at her hearth and baptised him Stephen in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

IV

For once, Mrs. Pincent was wrong. To Doris's supreme irritation—for she manifested not the slightest interest other than a fretful annoyance towards her offspring—Stephen lived.

Mildred came from Chelsea to have a look at the misfortune. Mildred was painfully undergrown, not taller than a child of twelve, half French and half Irish—that combination which achieves nearly always some sort of mysterious harmony.

Short, black feathers of soft hair were blown about her head. She had eyes like condensed light, a chalk-white throat seamed with tuberculosis, and a long chin—one of those faces that belong to childhood and old age but to nothing whatsoever in between. One could picture her skipping and shouting in the gutter, or shrivelled, crawling about in an old shawl picking up stray pieces of coal to shiver over in some hovel.

It was a rainy day and she wore a blue crêpe-de-Chine

dress and a string of yellow beads. Velvet slippers trodden down at the heel were tied on to her small feet, and silk stockings that became cotton almost at once covered her stunted legs.

"I'm afraid you've gone wrong, Doris," she remarked, "but you've not gone wrong in the right way; you've got no cash. I was at the Chelsea Pal last night with Princie."

Princie was a coloured friend of Doris's and the conversation tailed off into talk about the Chelsea Palace, the cinema and fox-trotting, and the black velvet slippers twinkled round the room practising a new step.

As soon as Doris was strong, she returned to Mildred in Chelsea and left Stephen to Miss Wickers.

It had been a great blow to Miss Wickers but strange to say she was not shocked.

She accepted the disaster with wonderful simplicity and she did not speak of the past but only of the future. Such as it was, her mind was a wholly constructive one.

She was not the patient religionist who waits for everything to happen and maintains that all is for the best. She was active to remedy evil and waste.

She had to live without many things, but it is questionable if she had ever had to live without grace, and its constant informing warmed, coloured, and directed her acts.

Incredible as it may seem, she carried on her usual work and attended successfully to Stephen at an age when an infant requires more attention than a wood fire.

She made him small garments in spare moments from the aftermath of the scissors and, guided by Mrs. Pincent, but with far more natural aptitude than that lady, she fed him on patent foods.

Considering what an extremely important rôle he had played, it was surprising how little they saw of Ernie. When they did see him, though he was complacent, he looked like a white rat in a trap and there were red rims round his mean eyes.

When he was asked inconvenient questions, like many another of his sex he said he was very busy and the womenkind felt, in spite of themselves, that they were

brutal to disturb this breadwinner who, nevertheless, produced no bread.

"Mr. Snow the agent, just kicked the bucket. First-class funeral—brass 'andles an' all. . . . See you again."

Miss Wickers was determined that Ernie should marry Doris. That was her fixed idea. Doris showed no enthusiasm, but she was willing enough and there were financial advantages.

With reluctance but resolution Miss Wickers took up the pen that she hated and wrote to Father Mole.

Though she had felt little compunction as to her own violent contact with what she would officially have called "Sin," she did not like it approaching the sanctity of Father Mole.

The whole of her being revolted against bringing the sacerdotal into touch with a side of life she would have preferred to ignore.

It was the same discomfort she had once suffered when she had noticed that muddy boot below the lace alb. But she did not lack moral courage.

Father Mole replied by return that he would see her that day at two-thirty, and the tête-à-tête thus came about in the little study.

Miss Wickers stood waiting, looking at the miniature Celtic cross and the old pipes on the oak mantelpiece and, in a few minutes, Father Mole came in, flatulent as a sail, still munching, grasping a table napkin that he had used for a month. Miss Wickers was intent on the future. Father Mole seemed to linger over a familiar past. Where had they met? What opportunities had they had? Did they frequent the pictures? "I always said they left the cemetery open too late," he remarked wearily.

With a heavy sigh he sat down, resting his big clay-coloured forehead in a hand that might have guided the plough. With the other he penned a note for Ernie that he handed to Miss Wickers and he said a few tired and mechanical words as to the consequences of sin.

Very soon it was all settled up. Father Mole interviewed the culprits who agreed to be married at twelve o'clock on February fifteenth.

Somehow, Miss Wickers was a little surprised and not a little lonely. It was all so swift and casual. Evidently Father Mole, Doris and Ernie belonged to a world where this sort of occurrence was a tiresome if reprimandable accident, not an event.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, for which the three women were bound that bright February morning, was an honest modern stone building, not wholly without some original taste, or at least, reticence, already mellowed by London.

Within the fold of the Good Shepherd it was at once austere and comfortable; cool in summer, warm in winter and at all seasons smelling very sweetly of wax, incense and flowers.

It was unpolluted by stencillings and the ecclesiastical upholstery which so often disfigures far more important churches than this one.

Father Willett, who was much occupied by ceremonial and decoration, saw that nothing of the tinsel or gaudiness of the cruder ritualism crept in to mar the unbroken calm of the bare walls.

Here and there sober saints stood out from carved niches and on the altar steps there was a powder-blue carpet strewn with fleurs-de-lys: the true vine twined itself round the marble pulpit under a broad crucifix and one or two slender beasts lifted their necks to threaten the heavy bunches of grapes.

The chancel was separated from the grocer, the pork butcher and Miss Wickers by a stone screen, delicate as lace and surmounted by six tall narrow vigilant angels with long golden wings meeting about each crowned head and long golden wings folded over each angelic heart.

Amongst the rush-bottomed, unstained chairs from which were suspended worn blue hassocks, in spite of the clergy who advocated free seats, people seized special personal homes and stuffed them with prayer-books, smelling salts and old gloves; great was the tribulation if any fugitive worshipper happened to stray into these kennels of the hounds of faith. Red, so vulgarly and readily abused, was conspicuous by its absence; all was quiet and temperate

except in the solid tower where the west window blazed green and peacock blue: over the porch, the Good Shepherd carrying the lamp, looked down on a wide, ardent, if rather squalid, flock.

When Doris, Miss Wickers and Mrs. Pincent arrived, Father Mole, wearing his stole and a soiled surplice, was awaiting them in the lady chapel: an altar boy was lighting two already used candles on either side of an Italian madonna.

At the high altar, Father Willett and the lady who cleaned the brasses were arranging two vases of white chrysanthema for the following Sunday. Father Willett, small, lean, tightly buttoned into his black cassock, stepped backwards and forwards studying the effect of the huge hothouse flowers that seemed hardly real. His thin fingers arranged and re-arranged securely, and each touch was like a kiss. Never once did curiosity turn his head in the direction of the human drama being enacted in the next chapel.

Miss Wickers, who wore a shady black lace hat, was elated with success.

Mrs. Pincent was sentimental, affected by her unusual surroundings, inclined to tears and reminiscences. She said it was a long time since she had entered a church and there is no reason to doubt the truth of this lachrymose statement. A pale green light from a high window struck Doris's still bloodless and unsympathetic cheek. Miss Wickers had made her a little grey dress for the occasion, the curls were pinned up under a black velvet tam-o'-shanter and she carried a few of what Mrs. Pincent (whose gift they were) called "crysants."

Only Ernie tarried. Father Mole began to show signs of impatience. He looked at his watch and a restless foot hammered the sacred floor.

Miss Wickers kept on running to the porch to see if Ernie was coming. She stood under the serene statue, looking anxiously down the comfortless street.

At last, in despair, she ran round to the undertaker's to find Ernie had not been there either. Traced to his lodgings it was discovered that Ernie had left silently in

the night with his cardboard suitcase, leaving the money for his bill but no address.

As has already been remarked, Ernie studied himself. His landlady, at least, would not trouble to trace him. And William Street knew Ernie no more.

Doris was obviously relieved. She showed no inclination to hunt Ernie, and she and the landlady were, after all, the two persons most intimately concerned.

In a few weeks she suggested taking a milliner's post with Mildred in Brighton. Miss Wickers readily agreed.

Now that there was Stephen it came rather expensive to employ an apprentice. So Doris went to Brighton, and Stephen was left, as indeed he had been from the first, with Miss Wickers.

V

Unlike Ernie, from time to time Doris showed a sign. Once a plush tam-o'shanter came for Stephen, another time a pair of button boots with white stitching. Now and again she turned up, redolent of Brighton and the pier.

Gradually the presents grew rarer and the visits rarer still.

It was Mildred, who came to cough her life out in a London infirmary, who brought the last news of Doris. Miss Wickers, sitting by the emaciated child in the melancholy ward with a bag of oranges in her lap, heard how Doris had been courted by a gentleman who kept a tobacco shop and how she had finally married him and gone to live in the west of England. Trusting not to the traditional smallness, but to the wideness, of the world, Doris had been silent and the gentleman in the trade knew nothing whatsoever as to the episode in William Street.

Miss Wickers asked Mildred if she would care for the consolations of religion, but, as Mildred declared most decidedly that she would not, Miss Wickers characteristically pushed the matter no further.

Thus it was that Stephen, were it possible, became still more Miss Wickers' undivided possession.

A great deal has been said of other persons and very little as to Stephen who is the centre of this record.

Stephen soon outgrew the hideousness of his first weeks. At six months he was plump, proud and delightful with a crest of yellow hair on the top of his head and from that time onwards he grew in beauty. By the time he was four or five he was beautiful in a manner wholly satisfactory to Miss Wickers; that is to say, he was not beautiful in some subtle, mysterious, picturesque way only apparent to artists and poets, but he was beautiful like an angel in a German picture in a conventional way all William Street and the parish could immediately see and appreciate.

His hair was tossed in gold rings all over his head, his eyelashes beat up and down like black fans on his rosy cheeks; his short, dewy upper lip obediently followed the line of the long lashes, while his blue eyes had that celestially abstracted expression that boys have when they are thinking of toffee.

But though Stephen thought of toffee, he was from the first a holy child, to Miss Wickers' great delight.

True, the influences were hotly favourable to this, yet, given surroundings, he had undoubtedly a natural disposition for holiness.

He was perfectly normal; he did the ordinary normal intolerable things common to boys. He pushed a wooden horse like a barrel with a red paper saddle and a fur tail to the embarrassment of the whole pavement.

He stole all Miss Wickers' coloured cottons to make a necklace.

He went through the trying stage of distorting his beauty by making horrible elastic faces he imagined added to the entertainment of the world and, when later, his teeth began to fall like acorns, he would pull one out with a jerk at meals and put that pearl of great price beside his plate while he went on eating his pudding.

With the other children he rejoiced exceedingly at the baby coffin in the undertaker's window—a specimen, had he but known, of parental handicraft—and in spite of Miss Wickers' remonstrances, he almost dislocated his neck turning round to stare at the parish monster, a dwarf with a huge head and legs ending at the knee, who used to go round collecting old bottles.

All these things he did and enjoyed.

Yet he was, nevertheless, a holy child, and Miss Wickers had every excuse for her ambition when she fancied him destined for the church. He collected little holy pictures as some children collect stamps, and he brought home innumerable little lead statues of saints as some boys bring home soldiers. In a surplice made by Miss Wickers out of an old Nottingham lace curtain, he would wave his arms and eject strange nasal sounds in imitation of Father Mole chanting the offices.

Close to the church was a small shop called "The Church Repository" that was kept by one Mr. Baines who was on very friendly terms with Miss Wickers. Mr. Baines was tall, thin, spotty, with a narrow pale face and fanatical hair. Like Miss Wickers, he was always cheerful and bursting with energy. One felt he had had ecclesiastical ambitions that had never been fulfilled.

He was boisterously pious, a sort of spiritual bounder, and he was in the habit of speaking of the whole company of heaven as if he had a special entrée. His familiarities made Miss Wickers shiver, but she was secretly impressed.

He spoke of Father Mole, who hated but used him, as "that blighter," and he was always talking of "popping round to the church for a mouthful of prayer." He sold stationery, church newspapers, luminous crosses for the moderate, crucifixes and statues for the more extreme, holy water stoups, miniature candlesticks, book-markers of ribbon with anchors and hearts like Italian paste.

It was here that Stephen spent so many of his pennies. Mr. Baines was exceedingly generous and Stephen often got things cheap, sometimes for nothing. And occasionally Mr. Baines would present him with a lovely lace picture card like the antimacassars in first-class railway carriages.

From the first time that Miss Wickers brought Stephen to church in velvet knickerbockers with three steel buttons at the knee, Father Mole took an interest in him.

Miss Wickers' ascension began when Father Mole suggested that Stephen should be an altar boy and carry the incense boat.

The non-religionist may remain cold, but the maternal will know something of Miss Wickers' heart that first Sunday when, as the procession entered from the vestry for the choral celebration, the whole expectant congregation rose to its feet and every parochial neck craned to see Stephen, who had so lately been eating his breakfast in an old jersey, now clothed in scarlet and in lace, padding softly in red felt slippers after Father Mole, his gloved hands folded over the silver incense boat, his whole being intent on ceremonial.

He was naturally adept, an ordinate server, and he soon rose to be thurifer. He quickly learnt to master the glowing charcoal, how to sprinkle the grains of gum and blow upon them, how to manipulate the many silver chains and swing the censer vigorously till the smoke rose and his blonde head appeared like one of those decapitated cherubs surrounded by clouds. And when, after the offertory, this child of casualty, baptised from a tea-kettle, advanced to the sanctuary gates, gathered the chains in his right hand and, bowing gravely, incensed the congregation, small wonder that Miss Wickers felt her soul assailed by the demon of spiritual pride.

On spring evenings, when the sewing machine was hushed for a space, when the inextinguishable lilacs once again conquered the soot in the cemetery, Miss Wickers walked with Stephen, who bloomed and blossomed, between the graves. Small wonder that jealousy was lifting its ugly head in the parish.

One day, returning from school, a hostile band met Stephen and accosted him. In words delectable to street arabs and cab-ranks, they strove to illuminate him as to his origin, and a dust bin of coarse humour was emptied over the defenceless head of the absent Miss Wickers.

Orange peel and stones followed words, and when Stephen reached William Street there was a cut over his left eye and the gold hair was matted with blood.

With that disconcerting mixture of nobility, fear, convention and secrecy so common in boys, Stephen refused to reveal the names of his persecutors.

Next Sunday Stephen was not in the chancel, but in the

body of the church with Miss Wickers, a white bandage round his head.

Father Willett gave out his text—"It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Father Willett looked very small, very keen in the vast pulpit. He had immense dignity and was no fanatic. In a steady voice that was the vehicle of conviction, of belief in Christianity and the value of its message, he preached a level, balanced yet most disturbing sermon. Everybody knew its nature except the offenders who happened to be sucking bull's-eyes and drawing caricatures on the fly-leaves of their prayer-books.

Miss Wickers touched another rather sharp rung in her spiritual ascent. Red vestments were worn, and she remembered that blood of the martyrs which is the seed of the church. In this episode, degrading to the culprits, she saw light round the victim; for was he not named Stephen and had he not been stoned?

VI

Like so many little boys, Stephen was tediously, yet indefinitely, delicate in his eighth year.

He was languid, given to obstinate coughs, catching one cold as soon as another was ended, constantly away from school and church.

Miss Wickers had to dive into the cracked jug more than once to send him to some Anglican sisters by the sea.

But after his eighth birthday he grew stronger and was once more to be seen on Sunday kneeling on the altar steps, holding up the priest's chasuble with one hand and ringing a silver bell with the other.

It was that year that Miss Wickers was first able to say that she made for "titled people." Lady Hart-Brown, who lived permanently at Hamley's Hotel, South Kensington, had heard of Miss Wickers through a hospital nurse who was often in attendance on those hundred and one imaginary ills that colour too much leisure.

Lady Hart-Brown sent for Miss Wickers and ordered

her to line an opera coat with satin, make up some velvet into a rest gown bordered with fur and trim a *saut-de-lit* with swansdown.

She told Miss Wickers to buy the lining for the opera coat and the fur edging for the rest gown, and added how she would settle up with her afterwards.

Now Miss Wickers did not like to say how she was not in the habit of doing this and how she had not the means for such expenditure, for she feared to lose such distinguished custom by appearing tiresome. So all the remains of her savings were invested in her new work. She was a little anxious. Still it was nice to be able to say in William Street: "Isn't this a dainty soderlee for Lady Hart-Brown" or "I am just popping round to Hamley's Hotel with Lady Hart-Brown's opera coat." And to pop round to Hamley's Hotel with Lady Hart-Brown's opera coat was to insinuate that Lady Hart-Brown went to the opera.

Lady Hart-Brown was unfortunately out, so of course she could not pay Miss Wickers. So Miss Wickers finished the *saut-de-lit* and went round to Hamley's again enclosing a bill with "Terms Cash." But there was no acknowledgment of the work and no answer to the second appeal.

Miss Wickers was out of pocket. She was indignant and left the rest gown alone, hoping the need of it might freshen Lady Hart-Brown's memory, but the weeks drifted into months and there was no sign from Hamley's Hotel.

That year there was feverish excitement over a mystery play that Father Willett had written to be performed in the parish hall just before the Christmas holidays. Stephen was chosen to impersonate the Holy Child.

Miss Wickers made him a long white garment bordered with gold and sprinkled with stars and he wore a wreath of red roses on his head. He appeared with his singularly beautiful feet bare, blessing the enraptured audience with uplifted fingers, and there were photographs of him on a postcard that were sold for a charity. But it was no weather for bare feet and Stephen fell ill, and very ill.

If Miss Wickers had experienced almost more than the

raptures of ordinary motherhood, she was now to be cruelly intimate with its tortures.

Stephen lay in bed beating the air with arms wasted as drumsticks, rolling his lustreless damp head on the grey pillow with that unbearable impotence of expression known only to beast and child; and only completely to the male child.

Every time Miss Wickers asked Stephen if he was better, a little better, he would give no drop of water to her agony. Like every male since the world began, he tore the heart of woman by saying he was worse.

The doctor said something about the extreme south of England, but money was short because of Lady Hart-Brown.

Miss Wickers shrank from asking help of a parish she knew to be a poor one, a parish which she had hitherto liberally and regularly assisted.

Proudly she had always been able to say how she worked for forty families, how she was always "comfortable" with a margin for the rainy day.

By Christmas Eve there was no improvement in Stephen's condition and Miss Wickers saw she was not going to be able, as had been her annual custom, to attend the triple masses at the Church of the Good Shepherd: the mass at midnight to celebrate the birth of Christ before all ages in the dim womb of time; the mass at dawn to celebrate the angelic choir and the birth of Christ upon earth; the mass in the morning to celebrate the birth of Christ in the human heart.

She could only leave Stephen to attend one of the three, and she was troubled as to which assistance was most acceptable to the company of heaven.

She did not like, at the busy season, to disturb Father Mole for advice, so she decided while Mrs. Pincent sat with Stephen to attend that third mass in the morning that celebrates the birth of Christ in the human heart.

There were many visitors at William Street.

Father Mole came bringing a sponge cake in a paper bag. Father Willett brought a holy picture, and Miss Wickers, who was sewing in the sick room, extracted one

of those many pins from her mouth and pinned a high-stepping lamb with a little scarlet banner over Stephen's cot. Then Mr. Baines arrived with a pink china angel holding a pale blue shell and the angel joined the lamb. But Stephen noticed neither the angel, the sponge cake, nor the lamb.

Between terror and pain was a certain satisfaction for Miss Wickers in the fact that the black figures were seen so often on her steps. It showed how much Stephen had come to matter.

At night when they were all gone there might have been only desolation to watch and smooth the crumpled sheet with Miss Wickers. Yet she was not wholly comfortless.

In the dingy room, with its flaking, faded, rose-strewn paper, its cracked window-pane, she saw Stephen, not as he was, catching a few minutes of restless slumber, but in scarlet and lace surrounded by sweet smoke and the sound of chains and bells, his careful hands folded over the silver vessel.

As the night-light flickered in the sloppy soap-dish, casting strange shadows on the ceiling that had once been white, she saw Stephen playing his important rôles in the romance of the Christian year. She saw him carrying a long thin lighted taper at Candlemas, she saw him carrying the blessed palms in a basket lined with lace on Palm Sunday, she saw him shouldering his corner of the portable altar in the May procession.

And when Stephen's weakness had become a thing to wring the heart till it was useless for any other purpose, when neither principalities nor powers nor visions could bring any consolation to the solitary watcher, heaven was merciful and removed Stephen from William Street.

Miss Wickers accepted Stephen's death very much as she had accepted his birth. Though she frequently dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief like a paint rag she put her own personal loss aside. She did not brood on what was over but considered the future in such light as was given to her.

As she pulled down the blinds after looking for a minute out of the cloudy window on the many unwashed steps, she was convinced that Stephen would be more comfortable

where he was than he would have been in William Street, more at home with angelic companions than with the children who threw stones and ugly words.

The day after Stephen's death came a letter from Lady Hart-Brown enclosing the retarded cheque and asking for her rest gown. So with the money that might have saved Stephen's life Miss Wickers was able to order a superior funeral.

She dressed Stephen in the white garment bordered with gold in which he had impersonated the Holy Child and she laid him in his white coffin. She would have liked to crown him with the wreath of red roses, but she only folded the waxen hands over the little cross on his chest.

He lay there smiling, sprinkled with stars, a Christian child, yet royal as some prince out of an ancient fairy story, some king's son over whom a magician has cast a spell of sleep, or like the waxen Christmas Babe which is one with the Christmas tree and its many candles.

Later, when the coffin lid had taken Stephen from William Street for ever, Father Willett came in and with a lavishness, a disregard of expense that went a not inconsiderable way to healing Miss Wickers' lacerated heart, covered the lid with lilies and white lilac.

VII

Stephen was splendidly ready for his last journey. The Lord was allowing His servant to depart not only in peace but with a certain glory.

He passed, as his mother had done before him, under the statue of the Good Shepherd.

Miss Wickers, Mrs. Pincent, and Miss Crawford followed with Mr. Baines who was carrying a tribute in which the beauty of a hundred spring flowers had been mutilated into a monstrosity like a bazaar pincushion.

The whole church was black with people. All the school children were there, including Stephen's old enemies. The lady who cleaned the brasses was there but the organist was in the organ loft as the service was fully choral.

Father Mole and Father Willett in black and silver vest-

ments preceded by the young barber carrying the silver cross, and followed by the whole choir, met Stephen at the porch.

The voices of the smaller boys sounded distant, pure, indifferent:

"There's a bright land far away,
Where 'tis everlasting day,"

they sang, and dull hearts were flooded with nostalgia for this bright land far away—something like Brighton, perhaps, at Whitsuntide.

Everybody was moved according to his separate and distinctive disposition and capacity.

Mrs. Pincent was weeping like a tallow candle. Mr. Baines was hot about the eyes. Father Mole was thunderous and cross. Father Willett, his cold hands pressed together, rigid, white, intensely collected within, had his own thoughts, possibly his own feelings.

Alleluia! Alleluia! they sang every minute; and these Alleluias seemed to be winging about the church like white birds escaping contamination, as Stephen had escaped the probable trials and humiliations of an uncertain existence in William Street.

And when Stephen, between the aisles of black people, was laid with his feet, his ten straight toes and clean-cut heels, towards the dawn and the six vigilant angels into whose ranks he was to be enrolled, Miss Wickers, in her own particular way, within the limits of William Street, touched at once the bottom of the darkest abyss of loneliness and the golden summits of a splendour both spiritual and of this world.

VIII

It had all taken a long time and it was already late for starting work when Miss Wickers stumbled up the steps over the habitual milk can.

It was Wednesday, and the interested organ grinder was giving William Street the "Merry Widow Waltz."

Miss Wickers knew instinctively as she crossed the

threshold how the desolation of the house with a dead child in it is nothing compared to the desolation of the house with no child in it whatsoever.

She put some old stew on for her dinner and soon the odour of onions filled the place.

It was a dark day and she had to light the gas jet in the back kitchen before she could begin her work. Darkness was once more covering the earth and a mist the people.

What a mercy there was a bright land far away where 'twas everlasting day!

She fumbled in her old workbox for the cottons, her busy feet felt for the treadle and she threaded the faithful sewing machine with rose colour. Soon it was humming as usual. And the woman who had found sat down to sew the fur trimming on Lady Hart-Brown's rest gown.

POOR MAN'S INN[1]

By RICHARD HUGHES

(From *The Forum*)

SCATTERED up and down the main English roads there are certain caves, barns, empty cottages, and other places of shelter that all tramps know of. You will tell them, probably, by seeing a few lousy rags hanging on bushes near, but they are surprisingly well hidden, as a rule. Once inside, more inadequate bits of rag, and tins for cooking, and the remains of the last fire; a shapeless candle-end on a bit of slate, a crust or two, perhaps, and a smell of mice.

One night in a rough spring when I was wet through to the tail of my shirt, walking in the Forest of Clun on the Welsh Marches, I left the road by a narrow gate on the right and turned into a quarry. Clun is one of the oldest oak-forests in Britain; very steep, wild country, not very far from Ludlow, a curious town crowded on a hill-top round the red castle where *Comus* was first acted. This quarry was of the same red stone. Once off the road, it bends to the left; you are at the bottom of a sort of shaft, roofed very far up with dripping oak-leaves; and on one side the rock caves in, leaving room for a dozen men or more to shelter on a ledge of sandstone. I felt my way in with both hands, for the night was black enough outside. The wind in the trees above roared, and every few moments, as they swayed, the branches unburdened themselves of rain like a wave breaking. Then the wind lulled, and from the sheltered ledge I heard a snoring, almost as loud as of a man in a fit. Then there were steps behind me, the clank of iron on stone.

I crept my way into shelter. A voice behind me:

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"Whisht, who's there? All right, Friend." A burly figure followed me in. I could hear an iron foot clink on the stone, and answered his greeting. He fumbled for a match and struck it, but the wind blew it out. I had a glimpse of a huge body, one of the broadest men I have ever seen, queerly dressed. Behind me the other lodger snored stertorously. The newcomer felt his way past me, breathing heavily and clicking his tongue in a hollow tooth. Paper rustled.

"Silly blighter! He's drunk as a lord. Rolled himself in newspaper, too, to keep the cold out. Guess it will serve our turn, Friend."

He stripped off the drunkard's covering, and must miraculously have found some dry wood in a recess of the cave, for I could hear him moving heavily about, still clicking his tongue in his tooth; and then he shielded the flame of another match in his cap, and lit a fire. Its little flames flickered desperately at first; then suddenly it blazed up, lighting the cave like a furnace-mouth, where the three of us were set like the Three Children. The flames made rubies of the nearer rain; the smoke sucked a little, battered down by the cold air outside, and wandered off towards the other end of the ledge.

The fire-lighter crouched over his fire. He was an immense man, not tall, but with long arms, a mountainous chest, and a broad flat face like a savage's, though it was more cheerful in expression. He had a knotted kerchief round his neck and wore a sleeveless coat of lion-skin; bare arms, with raindrops still glistening on the tattoo-marks; baggy sailor's trousers, which half hid his iron foot, were held up by a leather belt decorated with strips of tiger- and python-skin. By the fire he had set down a heavy bag that clinked with metal; rain-water was running out of its bottom. He blew out his cheeks and warmed his hands, thrusting them right into the smoke.

"Whew, it's a cruel night for sleeping rough! God knows why I ever took to it. I've got a tough little circus of my own laid up in London, waiting for the money to start it, and here I am walking the road like any poor blooming lug-biter. How long have you been on the road, Friend?

Look at *him now*,—a nice, sociable, matey sort of chap to spend the night with, ain't he?"

He picked up a small piece of rock and heaved it on to the stomach of the sleeping man, who hiccoughed suddenly and then went on snoring.

"Wake up, you silly blighter! Can't you see there's two gentlemen wanting to have a chat with you? Wake up! The Copper's after you! It's closing time! Wake up! Coo, I can't understand a chap like that, what drinks himself silly. Let's have a look at him."

He heaved over on to one hand, and held a burning branch over the sleeper's face.

"I know him too,—chap called Lenora. I done him down last Worcester Races. Won five pounds he did; oh, he was roaring drunk that day. I fetched an old monkey's skull what I'd got in my pack, curio-like; I wired it on to a haddock's back-bone and told him it was a Mermaid's Anatomy. Young one. He gave me four pound for it, he did. He's been looking for me ever since, they tell me. But *I* don't care. Wake up, you skunk! Don't you remember old Bill, what sold you the Anatomy? You been lookin' for me, have you? Eh? Wake up!"

But Mr. Lenora was dead to the world. Bill chuckled.

"Look at that, now! Born to be hanged, he is. See them eyebrows meeting? Born to be hanged, that means. I ain't a bit religious, but I'm very superstitious,—*you* know. Not Jesusy, but I do believe in a bit of luck. See them bits of snake skin? Do you think they're lucky, eh? I do. Holy, they are. Holy snake. I got them out in Malay, same as where I learnt tattooing and the Magic Coffin trick. But I ain't had a bit of luck, not since. Are you married?"

"No."

"That's right, Friend; don't you be, neither. It's a dirty duck what paddles always in the same puddle, *I* say. . . . I am."

"What?"

"Married. But I'm through with it. Look at that."

He rummaged inside his shirt and pulled out an old pocketbook, full of cuttings and photographs.

"See that? That's me. Slung up in chains sixty feet above deck, in seven pair of regulation hand-cuffs! See all the passengers watching? I got out in four minutes, same as I said I would. That's me as a little boy; you can guess I had a good home; white collar and all. Ah, that's the one."

He handed me a creased photograph of a young woman, in the conscious splendour of Sunday black, standing in front of a balustrade, one hand rested firmly on an aspidistre-pot on a fancy stand.

"Now, would you call her handsome?"

I examined it carefully. "I would."

He seemed disappointed.

"Would you? I wouldn't; not *real* handsome. Not like one of them flash girls. That's my wife! Irish girl; Irish temper too. Lumme! Lord alone knows what I wanted to do it for. We was married proper, *you* know,—Registry and all. Nor her either! She'd got birth, and she'd got education,—read easy as winking, she could. She hadn't got no business to marry a chap like me? Ought to know better, she did!"

Mr. Lenora stirred and muttered something unintelligible that was smothered in another snore. Bill turned on him, his face all comical with mock indignation.

"Now then, you low fellaa, will you kindly not interraapt!" He said this in an astonishingly good parody of an Oxford accent. "—Or I'll roll you out in the ruddy rain!" he added in his own voice, and chuckled.

He clicked his tongue in his tooth once or twice, meditatively.

"But I'm through with it," he went on: "Coo, lumme, what a life!—Hallo, who goes there?"

There was a sound of more footsteps through the rain; a man's cautious plodding through the dark, and the clip-clip of a loose sole on the shoe of the woman who followed him.

"Walk up! Walk up!" cried Bill cheerily.

But the stranger was unresponsive. He was a small man, with that roundness of figure that often comes of having too little to eat. As he paused at the edge of the firelight

he blew through his moustache so that the raindrops tumbled out of it. But the oddest thing about him was his nose; he had a nervous trick of twitching it, like a rabbit. He sat down with a grunt, taking not the slightest notice of the girl at his heels. She had pulled her skirt up to hood her head; her muddy petticoat flapped against her legs. She took equally little notice of him and sat down, too, a little way off, swathed like a mummy, half in the firelight and half in the shadow.

"Full bar to-night, gentlemen!" Bill went on, jocularly. "A pint of Old and Mild all round, please, Joe!—Coo, I could do with a bit of grog inside me to-night. Cruel, ain't it, Mr. Parker?"

"My name ain't Parker," said the stranger sullenly, his nose twitching, "it's Spencer. What do you call me Parker for?"

Bill looked at him and shook with mirth. "Coo! I don't know, I can't think. Now, why ever should I go and call him Parker for, eh, Friend?"

He dug me in the ribs and went off into fresh peals of mirth.

"Don't take no offense," he went on: "I ain't a fighting man. I ain't that sort of chap. If a man wants to quarrel with me, I don't hit him; not I!" He began to chuckle in anticipation of his little joke. "I just go up to him, friendly like, and bite a piece right out of his bloomin' face!" Mr. Spencer snorted. "All right. I ain't going to have a pull out of your mug, you needn't worry!"

Suddenly he spun around with incredible swiftness, and thrust his face close up against the stranger's, pressing his own nose with his finger. It had no bone in it and went absolutely flat like a piece of india-rubber. Mr. Spencer tumbled over in consternation.

"See now," said Bill, "that shook him! It always shakes 'em!" he added innocently, as if it were a habit of social intercourse with him. "It shook Nell. I done it in the Regist'y Office. It shook the Regist'ar; he told me to remember it was a Solemn Occasion. Coo!"

"You'd be a nice sort of chap to be married to, you would!" said Mr. Spencer, slowly and provocatively.

"So I was!" said Bill impressively. "But as I've just been telling this gentleman here, I'm through with it. I left Nell, back at Oxford. Months ago that was. Mind you, I was a good husband to her."

"What was you doing in Oxford?" I asked.

"Exercising my profession! Getting out of seven pair of handcuffs, thirty-five feet of chain, and a straight waistcoat in four minutes, while Nell took the hat round. I got handcuffs here,"—he tapped his sack—"of all the ages. I got a pair with teeth on 'em,—same as was used by the Savage Romans and the Ancient Mammoths of the Bohemian Desert. I've studied 'em. See here!"

He put his hand to his capacious nose and brought out of it a small instrument like a whistle. "See that? That's a master-key to all the handcuffs of Europe! Studied for that, I did; made it myself."

He put it back in his nose, where he seemed able to carry it in perfect comfort.

"As I was saying, we had a good week of it; they're a bit of All Right, them Oxford Police. But I didn't leave her, not till she come out of the 'Firmary. I was always a good husband to her, careful, like. I hung on till she was right again. Nobody can't say I wasn't a good husband to her."

"What was the matter with her?" I asked.

"Well, you see, we had a bit of a row; too many girls, *you* know. She used to get wild if I brought 'em into the house. Threatened to kill me, she used to. Only her temper, *you* know; she didn't mean nothing by it; she was a good girl at heart. I just took up the poker,—not to beat her, you know, just to *learn* her,—and she tripped up and broke her poor blooming ankle. Month, she was, in the 'Firmary."

Mr. Spencer snorted again and took off his boots. He ostentatiously poured the water out of them on to the fire to see it go up in steam. Then he began to examine the condition of his feet. But Bill went on, undisturbed.

"Pretty thin time of it I had. My show was stale; oughtn't never to do it more than a week. I didn't get more than a tanner a night. Nor I couldn't change it

easy. I was used to do the Magic Coffin Trick,—shove Nell in a coffin, padlocked 'ead and foot each end, then sor it through the middle. That always fetched 'em; but I couldn't do it without Nell. You can't do it with *any* girl you see. She's got to be made that way, like Nell was. Nor I hadn't got my Electrocuting Chair; *that* always fetched 'em, but you couldn't lug it around with you. Nor I couldn't think of any new trick. You know how it is. When you're in luck you can think of half a dozen new stunts; but when you're down on it you just can't think of nothing. Coo, lumme, I remember up Llandudno way, once, I got a bit of wood, and I nailed thousands of lug-worms on to it so as you couldn't see the wood for the worms. Then I put it in a tank and exhibited it as a marine monster, Pride of the Ocean! When the silly worms waggled, you see, they swum it about! I took pounds on pounds out of that, gate money. Stuff in the papers, there was: *'Unknown Monster Captured at Llandudno.'* The Johnnie came down from the Aquarium; *he* wanted to buy it. That put the wind up me, that did. I broke it up. Said I'd throwed it back in its native ocean, I did." Bill chuckled. "He offered a reward to anyone what could catch it again. They was all out fishing for weeks, they were. Coo, lumme!

"But as I was saying, I couldn't think of nothing. I couldn't do a bit of house-breaking, cos I hadn't got no money,—you must 'ave something if you're going to win. I got the brains, and I got the experience, but I 'adn't got the capital. There wasn't nothing for it but fire-eating. I done it. But it's terrible hard on the kidneys, that is; I was awful bad inside. No one can't do it more than six months, even ones what's used to it. When Nell was comin' out, I 'adn't got no more than half a crown. So the day before, I shoves a bob into her bed, and I beat it."

"Did she know you was going?" I asked.

"*Now!* Made a scene, she would 'ave. She was real fond of me, I was a good husband to 'er. I don't suppose she's got over it yet, proper. Terrible fond, she was."

Mr. Spencer was puffing with anger, his nose twitching up and down as if he had the ague.

"That's a nice edifying little story to tell a party of strangers! Washin' yer dirty linen in public!"

"Dirty linen?" said Bill, in genuine amazement: "Why, I don't see——"

He paused: and Mr. Spencer fidgeted nervously all over.

"Yus, dirty linen! You're as bad as a divorce-court, you are! You ought to be in jail, you did!"

The girl, sitting huddled away from the fire, was shivering, her teeth chattering with cold. Suddenly she threw the skirt back off her head. The light shone on a face of most delicate beauty, now marred and twisted with rage. Her great eyes glittered in her head like fire, her lips were drawn back tightly from her shining teeth. Bill stared at her stupidly; slowly his expression changed to one of delight and an extraordinary tenderness. *"Well, I'm——"* he began. Her hand was hidden in a fold of her dress . . . . there was the sudden crack of a revolver and Bill pitched right over sideways on to his face.

Mr. Spencer turned towards her, seemed to tower over her. "Whatever have you been and gone and done?" he said, very slowly.

Nell took no notice of him. The passion of her face had changed to a sort of impersonal hardness. She rose on to one knee, her loose, wet hair blowing against the roof of the cave. She threw the revolver down; it glanced on a stone and skidded down the slope to where Mr. Lenora was still sleeping,—*the man born to be hanged.*

Mr. Spencer still stared at her fixedly.

"Crikey!" he said presently; "Crikey!" several times, with increasing emphasis. Suddenly he let out a funny little screech in the back of his throat; his eyes were starting like a pug-dog's. Then he said "Lumme!" Then he caught up his two boots and floundered suddenly out of the cave, crashing through the bushes to the road. I could hear him hollering with terror as he ran, till his breath gave out.

Nell spoke for the first time; she had never taken her eyes off Bill, not for a moment.

"That'll learn him," she said in a matter of fact tone. "He won't do *that* again!"

Then she turned towards me, the soft Irish in her voice gradually increasing.

"Stranger," she said: "This is none of your business surely."

"It is not," said I.

"You had better be going," said she. She did not seem to have noticed Lenora lying there with the pistol by him but was looking at me. She was very beautiful.

I jerked my head towards the road.

"That one's gone," I said.

"He's gone surely."

"Would you come along of me a bit?" I suggested diffidently.

"Boy, wouldn't there be a fear creeping up your back at night to be with such as me?"

"I'd not be afraid."

"Brave boy!" She spoke with a sarcasm that was shattering and moved me to sulkiness.

"I'd—I'd not ask nothing of you."

For a moment the strange, statuesque woman seemed to flicker into life.

"Them as don't ask—don't get!"

"Will you come, then, Nell?"

"Do you want me? Certain?"

I rushed on, heedless of her strange tone:

"You're a grand woman! *I* couldn't kill a man like that and not turn a hair!"

Her bitter sarcasm flashed out again. She stared at me, slowly, from head to foot. "No, I think you could not."

I looked at Lenora, still sleeping drunkenly, with the revolver at his side. If I could get the girl away, no one would ever suspect *her*.

"Wouldn't you be afraid," I burst out, "to be walking alone at night, with the memory of *that?*" And I touched the giant with my toe.

"Walking?" she said and began to laugh, gently at first, and then like a cataract. "It's walking shall I be; they'll see my ghost in here, walking, they will!" She bowed her head forward and shook with peal upon peal of laughter; suddenly flung her head up, and laughed till the quarry

echoed with it; her hair came right down, her eyes streamed with tears, but still she laughed. My hair prickled on to its ends with horror.

"God go with you, you poor woman," I said hastily, "for *I* dare not."

The rain had ceased. High up among the treetops the moon raced through the clouds. As suddenly as she had begun, she grew calm again.

"No," she said slowly and with great emphasis, "No, *that* you daren't."

She began to plait up her hair, over her shoulder, coiled it round her head, and pinned it.

Suddenly she fell forward on the ground, scratching at it with her finger nails, crying, "Bill! Bill!" in a little husky voice like a child's. It was not a sight I could bear. I sat there biting at the back of my hand, staring at the dying fire, the moon, anything. Then again she rose up, breathing calmly and deeply, patted her hair once or twice, and like a shadow slipped out of the cave. She was gone.

Bill sat up.

"Whisht, is she gone, Friend? Coo, lumme, *that* shook her!" he chuckled happily.

I stiffened up where I still sat, cracking my head on the cave's roof.

"Aren't you hurt, man?" I stuttered.

"Hurt? Lord, no!" He chuckled. "Take it from me, Friend: give a woman a gun, and she'll miss you at six inches, but give her a knife, and she'll never go wrong, never! But *that'll* learn her not to go killing me!" He added half fiercely. "*That* ought to be a lesson to her, eh, Friend? Lord, she was pretty near mad, she was. She loved me that crool! You thought *you'd* go off with her, did you? Coo, lumme, what a joke! You are a caution!"

He roared with laughter, slapping his huge thighs. Then he heaved over to one side and picked up the revolver.

"'Tisn't your time yet, my friend," he said soberly enough, leaning over Mr. Lenora, whose face was twitching with some discomfort as he slept. "Though you haven't got *this* cove to thank you didn't wake up in clink to-mor-

row! Lumme, they'd have strung him, sure, what with his threatening me and all."

But Mr. Lenora slept on.

Bill chuckled again:

"Though I'm not saying it wouldn't be better for him if they did! It's got to come some time;—you can't go against a sure sign like them eyebrows,—and it would be better for his soul to be hanged when he hadn't done nothing than waiting till he had, wouldn't it, Friend?"

"You're right there, Mister," I answered conciliatingly.

But he suddenly swung round with incredible rapidity and covered me with his gun. His cheerful face was suddenly twisted with ferocity.

"So you thought *you'd* go off with her, did you?"

"I—I—I didn't mean anything!"

"Oh, you didn't, didn't you! Going with a married woman!" His mouth was still set like a wild beast's, but there was a gleam in his eye,—and I banked on it.

"She wasn't a married woman, Mister, she was a widow!"

He burst out laughing and thrust the revolver into his side pocket. "Bless you, I hadn't no cause to worry! I know Nell!"

"I don't know about you," said I, "but my legs are stiff as a board with wet and cold, and there's a good moon. Let's walk on a mile or two, before dawn."

"Sure," said Bill, and swung his huge sack.

Together we found our way out on to the road.

"No, Friend, as I was saying," began Bill sententiously, "give a woman a knife——"

There was Nell, huddled at the road's side, half in the moonlight. Bill touched her. She was quite dead, stabbed through the heart. Bill's face went grey; his lip dropped.

"Lumme!" he said, "I hadn't counted on that!"

Almost beside myself, I burst out into Welsh:

"Yr hen llofrudd i ti!" I cried: *"Yr hen . . ."*

Then he dropped on his knees, caught up her staring head in his arms.

JIMMY AND THE DESPERATE WOMAN[1]

By D. H. LAWRENCE

(From *The Criterion*)

"HE is very fine and strong somewhere, but he does need a level-headed woman to look after him."

That was the *friendly* feminine verdict upon him. It flattered him, it pleased him, it galled him.

Having divorced a very charming and clever wife, who had held this opinion for ten years, and at last had got tired of the level-headed protective game, his gall was uppermost.

"I want to throw Jimmy out on the world, but I know the poor little man will go and fall on some woman's bosom. That's the worst of him. If he could only stand alone for ten minutes. But he can't. At the same time, there *is* something fine about him, something rare."

This had been Clarissa's summing up as she floated away in the arms of the rich young American. The rich young American got rather angry when Jimmy's name was mentioned. Clarissa was now *his* wife. But she did sometimes talk as if she were still married to Jimmy.

Not in Jimmy's estimation, however. That worm had turned. Gall was uppermost. Gall and wormwood. He knew exactly what Clarissa thought—and said—about him. And the "something fine, something rare, something strong" which he was supposed to have "about him" was utterly outbalanced, in his feelings at least, by the "poor little man" nestled upon "some woman's bosom," which he was supposed to *be*.

"I am *not*," he said to himself, "a poor little man nestled upon some woman's bosom. If I could only find the right sort of woman, she should nestle on mine."

[1] Copyright, 1925, by D. H. Lawrence.

Jimmy was now thirty-five, and this point, to nestle or to be nestled, was the emotional crux and turning-point.

He imagined to himself some really *womanly* woman, to whom he should be *only* "fine and strong," and not for one moment "the poor little man." Why not some simple, uneducated girl, some Tess of the D'Urbervilles, some wistful Gretchen, some humble Ruth gleaning an aftermath? Why not? Surely the world was full of such!

The trouble was he never met them. He met only sophisticated women. He really never had a chance of meeting "real" people. So few of us ever do. Only the people we *don't* meet are the "real" people, the simple, genuine, direct, spontaneous, unspoilt souls. Ah, the simple, genuine, unspoilt people, we *don't* meet! What a tragedy it is!

Because, of course, they must be there! Somewhere! Only we never come across them.

Jimmy was terribly handicapped by his position. It brought him into contact with so many people. Only never the right sort. Never the "real" people: the simple, genuine, unspoilt, etc., etc.

He was editor of a high-class, rather high-brow, rather successful magazine, and his rather personal, very candid editorials brought him shoals, swarms, hosts of admiring acquaintances. Realise that he was handsome, and could be extraordinarily "nice," when he liked, and was really very clever, in his own critical way, and you see how many chances he had of being adored and protected.

In the first place his good looks: the fine, clean lines of his face, like the face of the laughing faun in one of the faun's unlaughing, moody moments. The long, clean lines of the cheeks, the strong chin and the slightly arched, full nose, the beautiful dark-grey eyes with long lashes, and the thick black brows. In his mocking moments, when he seemed most himself, it was a pure Pan face, with thick black eyebrows cocked up, and grey eyes with a sardonic goaty gleam, and nose and mouth curling with satire. A good-looking, smooth-skinned satyr. That was Jimmy at his best. In the opinion of his men friends.

In his own opinion, he was a sort of Martyred Saint

Sebastian, at whom the wicked world shot arrow after arrow —Mater Dolorosa nothing to him—and he counted the drops of blood as they fell: when he could keep count. Sometimes—as for instance when Clarissa said she was really departing with the rich young American, and should she divorce Jimmy, or was Jimmy going to divorce her?—then the arrows assailed him like a flight of starlings flying straight at him, jabbing at him, and the drops of martyred blood simply spattered down, he couldn't keep count.

So, naturally he divorced Clarissa.

In the opinion of his men friends, he was, or should be, a consistently grinning faun, satyr, or Pan-person. In his own opinion he was a Martyred Saint Sebastian with the mind of a Plato. In the opinion of his women friends, he was a fascinating little man with a profound understanding of life and the capacity really to understand a woman and to make a woman feel a queen; which of course was to make a woman feel her *real* self. . . .

He might, naturally, have made rich and resounding marriages, especially after the divorce. He didn't. The reason was, secretly, his resolve never to make any woman feel a queen any more. It was the turn of the woman to make him feel a king.

Some unspoilt, unsophisticated wild-blooded woman, to whom he would be a sort of Solomon of wisdom, beauty, and wealth. She would need to be in reduced circumstances to appreciate his wealth, which amounted to the noble sum of three thousand pounds and a little week-ending cottage in Hampshire. And to be unsophisticated she would have to be a woman of the people. Absolutely.

At the same time, not just the "obscure vulgar simplican."

He received many letters, many, many, many, enclosing poems, stories, articles, or more personal unbosomings. He read them all: like a solemn rook pecking and scratching among the litter.

And one—not one letter, but one correspondent—might be *the* one—Mrs. Emilia Pinnegar, who wrote from a mining village in Yorkshire. She was, of course, unhappily married.

Now Jimmy had always had a mysterious feeling about

these dark and rather dreadful mining villages in the north. He himself had scarcely set foot north of Oxford. He felt that these miners up there must be the real stuff. And Pinnegar was a name, surely! And Emilia!

She wrote a poem, with a brief little note, that, if the editor of the *Commentator* thought the verses of no value, would he simply destroy them. Jimmy, as editor of the *Commentator,* thought the verses quite good and admired the brevity of the note. But he wasn't sure about printing the poem. He wrote back, Had Mrs. Pinnegar nothing else to submit?

Then followed a correspondence. And at length, upon request, this from Mrs. Pinnegar:

"You ask me about myself, but what shall I say? I am a woman of thirty-one, with one child, a girl of eight, and I am married to a man who lives in the same house with me, but goes to another woman. I try to write poetry, if it is poetry, because I have no other way of expressing myself at all, and even if it doesn't matter to anybody besides myself, I feel I must and will express myself, if only to save myself from developing cancer or some disease that women have. I was a school-teacher before I was married, and I got my certificates at Rotherham College. If I could, I would teach again, and live alone. But married women teachers can't get jobs any more, they aren't allowed——"

THE COAL-MINER

By His Wife

The donkey-engine's beating noise
And the rattle, rattle of the sorting screens
Come down on me like the beat of his heart,
And mean the same as his breathing means.

The burning big pit-hill with fumes
Fills the air like the presence of that fair-haired man.
And the burning fire burning deeper and deeper
Is his will insisting since time began.

As he breathes the chair goes up and down
In the pit-shaft; he lusts like the wheel-fans spin
The sucking air: he lives in the coal
Underground: and his soul is a strange engine.

That is the manner of man he is.
I married him and I should know.
The mother earth from bowels of coal
Brought him forth for the overhead woe.

This was the poem that the editor of the *Commentator* hesitated about. He reflected, also, that Mrs. Pinnegar didn't sound like one of the nestling, unsophisticated rustic type. It was something else that still attracted him: something desperate in a woman, something tragic.

THE NEXT EVENT

If at evening, when the twilight comes,
  You ask me what the day has been,
I shall not know. The distant drums
  Of some new-comer intervene

Between me and the day that's been.
  Some strange man leading long columns
Of unseen soldiers through the green
  Sad twilight of these smoky slums.

And as the darkness slowly numbs
  My senses, everything I've seen
Or heard the daylight through, becomes
  Rubbish behind an opaque screen.

Instead, the sound of muffled drums
  Inside myself: I have to lean
And listen as my strength succumbs,
  To hear what these oncomings mean.

Perhaps the Death-God striking his thumbs
  On the drums in a deadly rat-ta-ta-plan.
Or a strange man marching as he strums
  The tune of a new weird hope in Man.

What does it matter! The day that began
In coal-dust is ending the same, in crumbs
Of darkness like coal. I live if I can;
If I can't, then I welcome whatever comes.

This poem sounded so splendidly desperate, the editor of the *Commentator* decided to print it, and, moreover, to see the authoress. He wrote, Would she care to see him, if he happened to be in her neighbourhood? He was going to lecture in Sheffield. She replied, Certainly.

He gave his afternoon lecture, on *Men in Books and Men in Life*. Naturally, men in books came first. Then he caught a train to reach the mining village where the Pinnegars lived.

It was February, with gruesome patches of snow. It was dark when he arrived at Mill Valley, a sort of thick, turgid darkness full of menace, where men speaking in a weird accent went past like ghosts, dragging their heavy feet and emitting the weird scent of the coal-mine underworld. Weird and a bit gruesome it was.

He knew he had to walk uphill to the little market-place. As he went, he looked back and saw the black valleys with bunches of light, like camps of demons it seemed to him. And the demonish smell of sulphur and coal in the air, in the heavy, pregnant, clammy darkness.

They directed him to New London Lane, and down he went down another hill. His skin crept a little. The place felt uncanny and hostile, hard, as if iron and minerals breathed into the black air. Thank goodness he couldn't see much, or be seen. When he had to ask his way the people treated him in a "heave-half-a-brick-at-him" fashion.

After much weary walking and asking, he entered a lane between trees, in the cold slushy mud of the unfrozen February. The mines, apparently, were on the outskirts of the town, in some mud-sunk country. He could see the red, sore fires of the burning pit-hill through the trees, and he smelt the sulphur. He felt like some modern Ulysses wandering in the realms of Hecate. How much more dismal and horrible, a modern Odyssey among mines and factories, than any Sirens, Scyllas or Charybdises.

So he mused to himself as he waded through icy black mud, in a black lane, under black trees that moaned an accompaniment to the sound of the coal-mine's occasional hissing and chuffing, under a black sky that quenched even the electric sparkle of the colliery. And the place seemed unhabitated like a cold black jungle.

At last he came in sight of a glimmer. Apparently, there were dwellings. Yes, a new little street, with one street-lamp, and the houses all apparently dark. He paused. Absolute desertion. Then three children.

They told him the house, and he stumbled up a dark passage. There was light on the little backyard. He knocked, in some trepidation. A rather tall woman, looking down at him with a "Who are you?" look, from the step above.

"Mrs. Pinnegar?"

"Oh, is it you, Mr. Frith? Come in."

He stumbled up the step into the glaring light of the kitchen. There stood Mrs. Pinnegar, a tall woman with a face like a mask of passive anger, looking at him coldly. Immediately he felt his own shabbiness and smallness. In utter confusion, he stuck out his hand.

"I had an awful time getting here," he said. "I'm afraid I shall make a frightful mess of your house." He looked down at his boots.

"That's all right," she said. "Have you had your tea?"

"No—but don't you bother about me."

There was a little girl with fair hair in a fringe over her forehead, troubled blue eyes under the fringe, and two dolls. He felt easier.

"Is this your little girl?" he asked. "She's awfully nice. What is her name?"

"Jane."

"How are you, Jane?" he said. But the child only stared at him with the baffled, bewildered, pained eyes of a child who lives with hostile parents.

Mrs. Pinnegar set his tea, bread and butter, jam, and buns. Then she sat opposite him. She was handsome, dark straight brows and grey eyes with yellow grains in them, and a way of looking straight at you as if she were used to holding her own. Her eyes were the nicest part of her.

They had a certain kindliness, mingled, like the yellow grains among the grey, with a relentless, unyielding feminine will. Her nose and mouth were straight, like a Greek mask, and the expression was fixed. She gave him at once the impression of a woman who has made a mistake, who knows it, but who will not change: who cannot now change.

He felt very uneasy. Being a rather small, shambling man, she made him aware of his physical inconspicuousness. And she said not a word, only looked down on him, as he drank his tea, with that changeless look of a woman who is holding her own against Man and Fate. While, from the corner across the kitchen, the little girl with her fair hair and her dolls, watched him also in absolute silence, from her hot blue eyes.

"This seems a pretty awful place," he said to her.

"It is. It's absolutely awful," the woman said.

"You ought to get away from it," he said.

But she received this in dead silence.

It was exceedingly difficult to make any headway. He asked about Mr. Pinnegar. She glanced at the clock.

"He comes up at nine," she said.

"Is he down the mine?"

"Yes. He's on the afternoon shift."

There was never a sound from the little girl.

"Doesn't Jane ever talk?" he asked.

"Not much," said the mother, glancing round.

He talked a little about his lectures, about Sheffield, about London. But she was not really interested. She sat there rather distant, very laconic, looking at him with those curious unyielding eyes. She looked to him like a woman who has had her revenge, and is left stranded on the reefs, where she wrecked her opponent. Still unrelenting, unregretting, unyielding, she seemed rather undecided as to what her revenge had been, and what it had all been about.

"You ought to get away from here," he said to her.

"Where to?" she asked.

"Oh"—he made a vague gesture—"anywhere, so long as it is *quite* away."

She seemed to ponder this, under her portentous brow.

"I don't see what difference it would make," she said. Then glancing round at her child: "I don't see what difference anything would make, except getting out of the world altogether. But there's *her* to consider." And she jerked her head in the direction of the child.

Jimmy felt definitely frightened. He wasn't used to this sort of grimness. At the same time he was excited. This handsome, laconic woman, with her soft brown hair and her unflinching eyes with their gold flecks, seemed to be challenging him to something. There was a touch of challenge in her remaining gold-flecked kindness. Somewhere, she had a heart. But what had happened to it? And why?

What had gone wrong with her? In some way, she must have gone against herself.

"Why don't you come and live with me?" he said, like the little gambler he was.

The queer, conflicting smile was on his face. He had taken up her challenge, like a gambler. The very sense of a gamble, in which he could not lose desperately, excited him. At the same time, he was scared of her, and determined to get beyond his scare.

She sat and watched him, with the faintest touch of a grim smile on her handsome mouth.

"How do you mean, live with you?" she said.

"Oh—I mean what it usually means," he said with a little puff of self-conscious laughter.

"You're evidently not happy here. You're evidently in the wrong circumstances altogether. You're obviously *not* just an ordinary woman. Well, then, break away. When I say, Come and live with me, I mean just what I say. Come to London and live with me, as my wife, if you like, and then if we want to marry, when you get a divorce, why, we can do it."

Jimmy made this speech more to himself than to the woman. That was how he was. He worked out all his things inside himself, as if it were all merely an interior problem of his own. And while he did so, he had an odd way of squinting his left eye and wagging his head loosely, like a man talking absolutely to himself, and turning his eyes inwards.

The woman watched him in a sort of wonder. This was something she was *not* used to. His extraordinary manner, and his extraordinarily bald proposition, roused her from her own tense apathy.

"Well!" she said. "That's got to be thought about. What about *her?*"—and again she jerked her head towards the round-eyed child in the corner. Jane sat with a completely expressionless face, her little red mouth fallen a little open. She seemed in a sort of trance: as if she understood like a grown-up person, but, as a child, sat in a trance, unconscious.

The mother wheeled round in her chair and stared at her child. The little girl stared back at her mother, with hot, troubled, almost guilty blue eyes. And neither said a word. Yet they seemed to exchange worlds of meaning.

"Why, of course," said Jimmy, twisting his head again; "she'd come, too."

The woman gave a last look at her child, then turned to him, and started watching *him* with that slow, straight stare.

"It's not"—he began, stuttering—"it's not anything *sudden* and unconsidered on my part. I've been considering it for quite a long time—ever since I had the first poem, and your letter."

He spoke still with his eyes turned inwards, talking to himself. And the woman watched him unflinchingly.

"Before you ever saw me?" she asked, with a queer irony.

"Oh, of course. Of course before I ever saw you. Or else I never *should* have seen you. From the very first, I had a definite feeling——"

He made odd, sharp gestures, like a drunken man, and he spoke like a drunken man, his eyes turned inward, talking to himself. The woman was no more than a ghost moving inside his own consciousness, and he was addressing her there.

The actual woman sat outside looking on in a sort of wonder. This was really something new to her.

"And now you see me, do you want me, really, to come to London?"

She spoke in a dull tone of incredulity. The thing was just a little preposterous to her. But why not? It would have to be something a little preposterous, to get her out of the tomb she was in.

"Of course I do!" he cried, with another scoop of his head and scoop of his hand. "*Now* I do *actually* want you, now I actually see you." He never looked at her. His eyes were still turned in. He was still talking to himself, in a sort of drunkenness with himself.

To her, it was something extraordinary. But it roused her from apathy.

He became aware of the hot blue eyes of the hot-cheeked little girl fixed upon him from the distant corner. And he gave a queer little giggle.

"Why, it's more than I could ever have hoped for," he said, "to have you and Jane to live with me! Why, it will mean *life* to me." He spoke in an odd, strained voice, slightly delirious. And for the first time he looked up at the woman and, apparently, *straight* at her. But, even as he seemed to look straight at her, the curious cast was in his eye, and he was only looking at himself, inside himself, at the shadows inside his own consciousness.

"And when would you like me to come?" she asked, rather coldly.

"Why, as soon as possible. Come back with me to-morrow, if you will. I've got a little house in St. John's Wood, *waiting* for you. Come with me to-morrow. That's the simplest."

She watched him for some time, as he sat with ducked head. He looked like a man who is drunk—drunk with himself. He was going bald at the crown, his rather curly black hair was thin.

"I couldn't come to-morrow, I should need a few days," she said.

She wanted to see his face again. It was as if she could not remember what his face was like, this strange man who had appeared out of nowhere, with such a strange proposition.

He lifted his face, his eyes still cast in that inturned, blind look. He looked now like a Mephistopheles who has

gone blind. With his black brows cocked up, Mephistopheles, Mephistopheles blind and begging in the street.

"Why, of course it's wonderful that it's happened like this for me," he said, with odd pouting emphasis, pushing out his lips. "I was finished, absolutely finished. I was finished while Clarissa was with me. But after she'd gone, I was *absolutely* finished. And I thought there was no chance for me in the world again. It seems to me perfectly marvellous that this has happened—that I've come across you——" he lifted his face sightlessly— "and Jane —Jane—why she's *really* too good to be true." He gave a slight hysterical laugh. "She really is."

The woman, and Jane, watched him with some embarrassment.

"I shall have to settle up here, with Mr. Pinnegar," she said, rather coldly musing. "Do you want to see him?"

"Oh, I——" he said, with a deprecating gesture, "I don't *care*. But if you think I'd better—why, certainly——"

"I do think you'd better," she said.

"Very well, then, I *will*. I'll see him whenever you like."

"He comes in soon after nine," she said.

"All right, I'll see him then. Much better. But I suppose I'd better see about finding a place to sleep first. Better not leave it too late."

"I'll come with you and ask for you."

"Oh, you'd better not, really. If you tell me where to go——"

He had taken on a protective tone: he was protecting her against herself and against scandal. It was his manner, his rather Oxfordy manner, more than anything else, that went beyond her. She wasn't used to it.

Jimmy plunged out into the gulfing blackness of the Northern night, feeling how horrible it was, but pressing his hat on his brow in a sense of strong adventure. He was going through with it.

At the baker's shop, where she had suggested he should ask for a bed, they would have none of him. Absolutely they didn't like the looks of him. At the Pub, too, they shook their heads: didn't want to have anything to do with

him. But, in a voice more expostulatingly Oxford than ever, he said:

"But look here—you can't ask a man to sleep under one of these hedges. Can't I see the landlady?"

He persuaded the landlady to promise to let him sleep on the big, soft settee in the parlour, where the fire was burning brightly. Then, saying he would be back about ten, he returned through mud and drizzle up New London Lane.

The child was in bed, a saucepan was boiling by the fire. Already the lines had softened a little in the woman's face.

She spread a cloth on the table. Jimmy sat in silence, feeling that she was hardly aware of his presence. She was absorbed, no doubt, in the coming of her husband. The stranger merely sat on the sofa, and waited. He felt himself wound up tight. And once he was really wound up, he could go through with anything.

They heard the nine-o'clock whistle at the mine. The woman then took the saucepan from the fire and went into the scullery. Jimmy could smell the smell of potatoes being strained. He sat quite still. There was nothing for him to do or to say. He was wearing his big black-rimmed spectacles, and his face, blank and expressionless in the suspense of waiting, looked like the death-mask of some sceptical philosopher, who could wait through the ages, and who could hardly distinguish life from death at any time.

Came the heavy-shod tread up the house entry, and the man entered, rather like a blast of wind. The fair moustache stuck out from the blackish, mottled face, and the fierce blue eyes rolled their whites in the coal-blackened sockets.

"This gentleman is Mr. Frith," said Emily Pinnegar.

Jimmy got up, with a bit of an Oxford wriggle, and held out his hand, saying: "How do you do?"

His grey eyes, behind the spectacles, had an uncanny whitish gleam.

"My hand's not fit to shake hands," said the miner. "Take a seat."

"Oh, nobody minds coal-dust," said Jimmy, subsiding on to the sofa. "It's clean dirt."

"They say so," said Pinnegar.

He was a man of medium height, thin, but energetic in build.

Mrs. Pinnegar was running hot water into a pail from the bright brass tap of the stove, which had a boiler to balance the oven. Pinnegar dropped heavily into a wooden armchair, and stooped to pull off his ponderous grey pit-boots. He smelled of the strange, stale underground. In silence he pulled on his slippers, then rose, taking his boots into the scullery. His wife followed with the pail of hot water. She returned and spread a coarse roller-towel on the steel fender. The man could be heard washing in the scullery, in the semi-dark. Nobody said anything. Mrs. Pinnegar attended to her husband's dinner.

After a while, Pinnegar came running in, naked to the waist, and squatted plumb in front of the big red fire, on his heels. His head and face and the front part of his body were all wet. His back was grey and unwashed. He seized the towel from the fender and began to rub his face and head with a sort of brutal vigour, while his wife brought a bowl, and with a soapy flannel silently washed his back, right down to the loins, where the trousers were rolled back. The man was entirely oblivious of the stranger—this washing was part of the collier's ritual, and nobody existed for the moment. The woman, washing her husband's back, stooping there as he kneeled with knees wide apart, squatting on his heels on the rag hearthrug, had a peculiar look on her strong, handsome face, a look sinister and derisive. She was deriding something or somebody; but Jimmy could not make out whom or what.

It was a new experience for him to sit completely and brutally excluded, from a personal ritual. The collier vigorously rubbed his own fair, short hair, till it all stood on end, then he stared into the red-hot fire, oblivious, while the red colour burned in his cheeks. Then again he rubbed his breast and his body with the rough towel, brutally, as if his body were some machine he was cleaning, while his wife, with a peculiar slow movement, dried his back with another towel.

She took away the towel and bowl. The man was dry.

He still squatted with his hands on his knees, gazing abstractedly, blankly into the fire. That, too, seemed part of his daily ritual. The colour flushed in his cheeks, his fair moustache was rubbed on end. But his hot blue eyes stared hot and vague into the red coals, while the red glare of the coal fell on his breast and naked body.

He was a man of about thirty-five, in his prime, with a pure smooth skin and no fat on his body. His muscles were not large, but quick, alive with energy. And as he squatted bathing abstractedly in the glow of the fire, he seemed like some pure-moulded engine that sleeps between its motions, with incomprehensible eyes of dark iron-blue.

He looked round, always averting his face from the stranger on the sofa, shutting him out of consciousness. The wife took out a bundle from the dresser-cupboard, and handed it to the out-stretched, work-scarred hand of the man on the hearth. Curious, that big, horny, work-battered clean hand, at the end of the suave, thin naked arm.

Pinnegar unrolled his shirt and undervest in front of the fire, warmed them for a moment in the glow, vaguely, sleepily, then pulled them over his head. And then at last he rose, with his shirt hanging over his trousers, and in the same abstract, sleepy way, shutting the world out of his consciousness, he went out again to the scullery, pausing at the same dresser-cupboard to take out his rolled-up day trousers.

Mrs. Pinnegar took away the towels and set the dinner on the table—rich, oniony stew out of a hissing brown stew-jar, boiled potatoes, and a cup of tea. The man returned from the scullery, in his clean flannelette shirt and black trousers, his fair hair neatly brushed. He planked his wooden armchair beside the table, and sat heavily down, to eat.

Then he looked at Jimmy, as one wary, probably hostile, man looks at another.

"You're a stranger in these parts, I gather?" he said. There was something slightly formal, even a bit pompous, in his speech.

"An absolute stranger," replied Jimmy, with a slight aside grin.

The man dabbed some mustard on his plate, and glanced at his food to see if he would like it.

"Come from a distance, do you?" he asked, as he began to eat. As he ate, he seemed to become oblivious again of Jimmy, bent his head over his plate, and ate. But probably he was ruminating something all the time, with barbaric wariness.

"From London," said Jimmy, warily.

"London!" said Pinnegar, without looking from his plate.

Mrs. Pinnegar came and sat, in ritualistic silence, in her tall-backed rocking-chair under the light.

"What brings you this way, then?" asked Pinnegar, stirring his tea.

"Oh!" Jimmy writhed a little on the sofa. "I came to see Mrs. Pinnegar."

The miner took a hasty gulp of tea.

"You're acquainted then, are you?" he said, still without looking round. He sat with his side-face to Jimmy.

"Yes, we are *now*," explained Jimmy. "I didn't know Mrs. Pinnegar till this evening. As a matter of fact, she sent me some poems for the *Commentator*—I'm the editor—and I thought they were good, so I wrote and told her so. Then I felt I wanted to come and see her, and she was willing, so I came."

The man reached out, cut himself a piece of bread, and swallowed a large mouthful.

"You thought her poetry was good?" he said, turning at last to Jimmy and looking straight at him, with a stare something like the child's, but aggressive. "Are you going to put it in your magazine?"

"Yes, I think I am," said Jimmy.

"I never read but one of her poems—something about a collier she knew all about, because she'd married him," he said, in his peculiar harsh voice, that had a certain jeering clang in it, and a certain indomitableness.

Jimmy was silent. The other man's harsh fighting-voice made him shrink.

"I could never get on with the *Commentator* myself," said Pinnegar, looking round for his pudding, pushing his

meat-plate aside. "Seems to me to go a long way round to get nowhere."

"Well, probably it *does,*" said Jimmy, squirming a little. "But so long as the *way* is interesting! I don't see that anything gets anywhere at present—certainly no periodical."

"I don't know," said Pinnegar. "There's some facts in the *Liberator*—and there's some ideas in the *Janus*. I can't see the use, myself, of all these feelings folk say they have. They get you nowhere."

"But," said Jimmy, with a slight pouf of laughter, "where do you *want* to get? It's all very well talking about getting somewhere, but where, where in the world to-day do you *want* to get? In general, I mean. If you want a better job in the mine—all right, go ahead and get it. But when you begin to talk about getting somewhere, in *life*—why, you've got to know what you're talking about."

"I'm a man, aren't I?" said the miner, going very still and hard.

"But what do you *mean,* when you say you're a man?" snarled Jimmy, really exasperated. "What do you mean? Yes, you *are* a man. But what about it?"

"Haven't I the right to say I won't be made use of?" said the collier, slow, harsh, and heavy.

"You've got a right to *say* it," retorted Jimmy, with a pouf of laughter. "But it doesn't *mean* anything. We're all made use of, from King George downwards. We have to be. When you eat your pudding you're making use of hundreds of people—including your wife."

"I know it. I know it. It makes no difference, though. I'm not going to be made use of."

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "That's just a phrase, like any other."

The miner sat very still in his chair, his face going hard and remote. He was evidently thinking over something that was stuck like a barb in his consciousness, something he was trying to harden over, as the skin sometimes hardens over a steel splinter in the flesh.

"I'm nothing but made use of," he said, now talking hard

and final, to himself, and staring out into space. "Down the pit, I'm made use of, and they give me a wage, such as it is. At the house, I'm made use of, and my wife sets the dinner on the table as if I was a customer in a shop."

"But what do you *expect?*" cried Jimmy, writhing in his chair.

"Me? What do I expect? I expect nothing. But I tell you what——" he returned, and looked straight and hard into Jimmy's eyes—"I'm not going to put up with anything, either."

Jimmy saw the hard finality in the other man's eyes, and squirmed away from it.

"If you *know* what you're not going to put up with——" he said.

"I don't want my wife writing poetry! And sending it to a parcel of men she's never seen. *I* don't want my wife sitting like Queen Boadicea, when I come home, and a face like a stone wall with holes in it. I don't know what's wrong with her. She doesn't know herself. But she does as she likes. Only, mark you, I do the same."

"Of course!" cried Jimmy, though there was no of course about it.

"She's told you I've got another woman?"

"Yes."

"And I'll tell you for why. If I give in to the coal face, and go down the mine every day to eight hours' slavery, more or less, somebody's got to give in to me."

"Then," said Jimmy, after a pause, "if you mean you want your wife to submit to you—well, that's the problem. You have to marry the woman who *will* submit."

It was amazing, this from Jimmy. He sat there and lectured the collier like a Puritan Father, completely forgetting the disintegrating flutter of Clarissa, in his own background.

"I want a wife who'll please me, who'll want to please me," said the collier.

"Why should *you* be pleased, any more than anybody else?" asked the wife coldly.

"My child, my little girl wants to please me—if her mother would let her. But the women hang together. I

tell you"—and here he turned to Jimmy, with a blaze in his dark blue eyes—"I want a woman to please me, a woman who's anxious to please me. And if I can't find her in my own home, I'll find her out of it."

"I hope she pleases you," said the wife, rocking slightly.

"Well," said the man, "she does."

"Then why don't you go and live with her altogether?" she said.

He turned and looked at her.

"Why don't I?" he said. "Because I've got my home. I've got my house, I've got my wife, let her be what she may, as a woman to live with. And I've got my child. Why should I break it all up?"

"And what about me?" she asked coldly and fiercely.

"You? You've got a home. You've got a child. You've got a man who works for you. You've got what you want. You do as you like——"

"Do I?" she asked, with intolerable sarcasm.

"Yes. Apart from the bit of work in the house, you do as you like. If you want to go, you can go. But while you live in my house, you must respect it. You bring no men here, you see."

"Do *you* respect your home?" she said.

"Yes! I do! If I get another woman—who pleases me —I deprive you of nothing. All I ask of you is to do your duty as a housewife."

"Down to washing your back!" she said, heavily sarcastic; and, Jimmy thought, a trifle vulgar.

"Down to washing my back, since it's got to be washed," he said.

"What about the other woman? Let her do it."

"This is my home."

The wife gave a strange movement, like a mad woman.

Jimmy sat rather pale and frightened. Behind the collier's quietness he felt the concentration of almost cold anger and an unchanging will. In the man's lean face he could see the bones, the fixity of the male bones, and it was as if the human soul, or spirit, had gone into the living skull and skeleton, almost invulnerable.

Jimmy, for some strange reason, felt a wild anger

against this bony and logical man. It was the hard-driven coldness, fixity, that he could not bear.

"Look here!" he cried, in a resonant Oxford voice, his eyes glaring and casting inwards behind his spectacles. "You say Mrs. Pinnegar is *free*—free to do as she pleases. In that case, you have no objection if she comes with *me* right away from here."

The collier looked at the pale, strange face of the editor in wonder. Jimmy kept his face slightly averted, and sightless, seeing nobody. There was a Mephistophelian tilt about the eyebrows, and a Martyred Sebastian straightness about the mouth.

"Does she *want* to?" asked Pinnegar, with devastating incredulity. The wife smiled faintly, grimly. She could see the vanity of her husband in his utter inability to believe that she could prefer the other man to him.

"That," said Jimmy, "you must ask her yourself. But it's what I came here for: to ask her to come and live with me, and bring the child."

"You came without having seen her, to ask her that?" said the husband, in growing wonder.

"Yes," said Jimmy, vehemently, nodding his head with drunken emphasis. "Yes! Without ever having seen her!"

"You've caught a funny fish this time, with your poetry," he said, turning with curious husband-familiarity to his wife. She hated this off-hand husband-familiarity.

"What sort of fish have *you* caught?" she retorted. "And what did you catch *her* with?"

"Bird-line!" he said, with a faint, quick grin.

Jimmy was sitting in suspense. They all three sat in suspense, for some time.

"And what are you saying to him?" said the collier at length.

Jimmy looked up, and the malevolent half-smile on his face made him look rather handsome again, a mixture of faun and Mephisto. He glanced curiously, invitingly, at the woman who was watching him from afar.

"I say yes!" she replied, in a cool voice.

The husband became very still, sitting erect in his wooden armchair and staring into space. It was as if he

were fixedly watching something fly away from him, out of his own soul. But he was not going to yield at all, to any emotion.

He could not now believe that this woman should *want* to leave him. Yet she did.

"I'm sure it's all for the best," said Jimmy, in his Puritan-Father voice. "You don't mind, really"—he drawled uneasily—"if she brings the child. I give you my word I'll do my very best for it."

The collier looked at him as if he were very far away. Jimmy quailed under the look. He could see that the other man was relentlessly killing the emotion in himself, stripping himself, as it were, of his own flesh, stripping himself to the hard, unemotional bone of the human male.

"I give her a blank cheque," said Pinnegar, with numb lips. "She does as she pleases."

"So much for fatherly love, compared with selfishness," she said.

He turned and looked at her with that curious power of remote anger. And immediately she became still, quenched.

"I give you a blank cheque, as far as I'm concerned," he repeated abstractedly.

"It *is* blank indeed!" she said, with her first touch of bitterness.

Jimmy looked at the clock. It was growing late: he might be shut out of the public-house. He rose to go, saying he would return in the morning. He was leaving the next day, at noon, for London.

He plunged into the darkness and mud of that black, night-ridden country. There was a curious elation in his spirits, mingled with fear. But then he always needed an element of fear, really, to elate him. He thought with terror of those two human beings left in that house together. The frightening state of tension! He himself could never bear an extreme tension. He always had to compromise, to become apologetic and pathetic. He would be able to manage Mrs. Pinnegar that way. Emily! He must get used to saying it. Emily! The Emilia was absurd. He had never known an Emily.

He felt really scared, and really elated. He was doing

something big. It was not that he was *in love* with the woman. But, my God, he wanted to take her away from that man. And he wanted the adventure of her. Absolutely the adventure of her. He felt really elated, really himself, really manly.

But in the morning he returned rather sheepishly to the collier's house. It was another dark, drizzling day, with black trees, black road, black hedges, blackish brick houses, and the smell and the sound of collieries under a skyless day. Like living in some weird underground.

Unwillingly he went up that passage-entry again, and knocked at the back door, glancing at the miserable little back garden with its cabbage-stalks and its ugly sanitary arrangements.

The child opened the door to him: with her fair hair, flushed cheeks, and hot, dark-blue eyes.

"Hello, Jane!" he said.

The mother stood tall and square, by the table, watching him with portentous eyes, as he entered. She was handsome, but her skin was not very good: as if the battle had been too much for her health. Jimmy glanced up at her smiling his slow, ingratiating smile, that always brought a glow of success into a woman's spirit. And as he saw her gold-flecked eyes searching in his eyes, without a bit of kindliness, he thought to himself: "My God, however am I going to sleep with that woman!" His will was ready, however, and he would manage it somehow.

And when he glanced at the motionless, bony head and lean figure of the collier seated in the wooden armchair by the fire, he was the more ready. He must triumph over that man.

"What train are you going by?" asked Mrs. Pinnegar.

"By the twelve-thirty." He looked up at her as he spoke, with the wide, shining, childlike, almost coy eyes that were his peculiar asset. She looked down at him in a sort of interested wonder. She seemed almost fascinated by his childlike, shining, inviting dark-grey eyes, with their long lashes: such an absolute change from that dangerous unyielding that looked out always from the back of her husband's blue eyes. Her husband always seemed like a

menace to her, in his thinness, his concentration, his eternal unyielding. And this man looked at one with the wide, shining, fascinating eyes of a young Persian kitten, something at once bold and shy and coy and strangely inviting. She fell at once under their spell.

"You'll have dinner before you go," she said.

"No!" he cried in panic, unwilling indeed to eat before that other man. "No, I ate a fabulous breakfast. I will get a sandwich when I change in Sheffield: *really!*"

She had to go out shopping. She said she would go out to the station with him when she got back. It was just after eleven.

"But look here," he said, addressing also the thin abstracted man who sat unnoticing, with a newspaper, "we've got to get this thing settled. I *want* Mrs. Pinnegar to come and live with me, her and the child. And she's coming! So don't you think, now, it would be better if she came right along with me to-day! Just put a few things in a bag and come along. Why drag the thing out?"

"I tell you," replied the husband, "she has a blank cheque from me to do as she likes."

"All right, then! Won't you do that? Won't you come along with me now?" said Jimmy, looking up at her exposedly, but casting his eyes a bit inwards. Throwing himself with deliberate impulsiveness on her mercy.

"I can't!" she said decisively. "I can't come to-day."

"But why not—really? Why not, while I'm here? You have that blank cheque, you can do as you please——"

"The blank cheque won't get me far," she said rudely; "I can't come to-day, anyhow."

"When can you come, then?" he said, with that queer, petulant pleading. "The sooner the better, surely."

"I can come on Monday," she said abruptly.

"Monday!" He gazed up at her in a kind of panic, through his spectacles. Then he set his teeth again, and nodded his head up and down. "All right, then! To-day is Saturday. Then Monday!"

"If you'll excuse me," she said, "I've got to go out for a few things. I'll walk to the station with you when I get back."

She bundled Jane into a little sky-blue coat and bonnet, put on a heavy black coat and black hat herself, and went out.

Jimmy sat very uneasily opposite the collier, who also wore spectacles to read. Pinnegar put down the newspaper and pulled the spectacles off his nose, saying something about a Labour Government.

"Yes," said Jimmy. "After all, best be logical. If you *are* democratic, the only logical thing is a Labour Government. Though, personally, one Government is as good as another, to me."

"Maybe so!" said the collier. "But *something's* got to come to an end, sooner or later."

"Oh, a great deal!" said Jimmy, and they lapsed into silence.

"Have you been married before?" asked Pinnegar, at length.

"Yes. My wife and I are divorced."

"I suppose you want me to divorce *my* wife?" said the collier.

"Why—yes!—that would be best——"

"It's the same to me," said Pinnegar; "divorce or no divorce. I'll *live* with another woman, but I'll never *marry* another. Enough is as good as a feast. But if she wants a divorce, she can have it."

"It would certainly be best," said Jimmy.

There was a long pause. Jimmy wished the woman would come back.

"I look on you as an instrument," said the miner. "Something had to break. You are the instrument that breaks it."

It was strange to sit in the room with this thin, remote, wilful man. Jimmy was a bit fascinated by him. But, at the same time, he hated him because he could not be in the same room with him without being under his spell. He felt himself dominated. And he hated it.

"My wife," said Pinnegar, looking up at Jimmy with a peculiar, almost merry, teasing smile, "expects to see me go to pieces when she leaves me. It is her last hope."

Jimmy ducked his head and was silent, not knowing what to say. The other man sat still in his chair, like a

sort of infinitely patient prisoner, looking away out of the window and waiting.

"She thinks," he said again, "that she has some wonderful future awaiting her somewhere, and you're going to open the door."

And again the same amused smile was in his eyes.

And again Jimmy was fascinated by the man. And again he hated the spell of this fascination. For Jimmy wanted to be, in his own mind, the strongest man among men, but particularly among women. And this thin, peculiar man could dominate him. He knew it. The very silent unconsciousness of Pinnegar dominated the room, wherever he was.

Jimmy hated this.

At last Mrs. Pinnegar came back, and Jimmy set off with her. He shook hands with the collier.

"Good-bye!" he said.

"Good-bye!" said Pinnegar, looking down at him with those amused blue eyes, which Jimmy knew he would never be able to get beyond.

And the walk to the station was almost a walk of conspiracy against the man left behind, between the man in spectacles and the tall woman. They arranged the details for Monday. Emily was to come by the nine o'clock train: Jimmy would meet her at Marylebone, and instal her in his house in St. John's Wood. Then, with the child, they would begin a new life. Pinnegar would divorce his wife, or she would divorce him: and then, another marriage.

Jimmy got a tremendous kick out of it all on the journey home. He felt he had really done something desperate and adventurous. But he was in too wild a flutter to analyse any results. Only, as he drew near London, a sinking feeling came over him. He was desperately tired after it all, almost too tired to keep up.

Nevertheless, he went after dinner and sprang it all on Severn.

"You damn fool!" said Severn, in consternation. "What did you do it for?"

"Well," said Jimmy, writhing. "Because *I wanted* to."

"Good God! The woman sounds like the head of

Medusa. You're a hero of some stomach, I must say! Remember Clarissa?"

"Oh," writhed Jimmy. "But this is different."

"Ay, her name's Emma, or something of that sort, isn't it?"

"Emily!" said Jimmy briefly.

"Well, you're a fool, anyway, so you may as well keep on acting in character. I've no doubt, by playing weeping-willow, you'll outlive all the female storms you ever prepare for yourself. I never yet did see a weeping-willow uprooted by a gale, so keep on hanging your harp on it, and you'll be all right. Here's luck! But for a man who was looking for a little Gretchen to adore him, you're a corker!"

Which was all that Severn had to say. But Jimmy went home with his knees shaking. On Sunday morning he wrote an anxious letter. He didn't know how to begin it: *Dear Mrs. Pinnegar* and *Dear Emily* seemed either too late in the day or too early. So he just plunged in, without dear anything.

"I want you to have this before you come. Perhaps we have been precipitate. I only beg you to decide *finally*, for yourself, before you come. Don't come, please, unless you are absolutely sure of yourself. If you are *in the least* unsure, wait a while, wait till you are quite certain, one way or the other.

"For myself, if you don't come I shall understand. But please send me a telegram. If you do come, I shall welcome both you and the child. Yours ever—J.F."

He paid a man his return fare, and three pounds extra, to go on the Sunday and deliver this letter.

The man came back in the evening. He had delivered the letter. There was no answer.

Awful Sunday night: tense Monday morning!

A telegram: *"Arrive Marylebone* 12.50 *with Jane. Yours ever. Emily."*

Jimmy set his teeth and went to the station. But when he felt her looking at him, and so met her eyes: and after that saw her coming slowly down the platform, holding the child by the hand, her slow cat's eyes smouldering under

her straight brows, smouldering at him: he almost swooned. A sickly grin came over him as he held out his hand. Nevertheless he said:

"I'm *awfully* glad you came."

And as he sat in the taxi, a perverse but intense desire for her came over him, making him almost helpless. He could feel, so strongly, the presence of that other man about her, and this went to his head like neat spirits. That other man! In some subtle, inexplicable way, he was actually bodily present, the husband. The woman moved in his aura. She was hopelessly married to him.

And this went to Jimmy's head like neat whiskey. Which of the two would fall before him with a greater fall—the woman, or the man, her husband?

THE REDEMPTION OF MADAME FRADEAU[1]

By KENNETH MACNICHOL

(From *Blackwood's Magazine*)

IT is true, said René Guizet smilingly, that there is no logical reason why I should continue to inhabit but two small rooms in the rue du Maistre. So I told Monsieur, our Editor of "Le Grand Bavard," when he recently suggested, not without tact, that here was a questionable address for a Director of our dignified Company. I pointed out, however, that one may dispense with personal visiting-cards. I shall not change my address. When I came to Paris from my native Provence I was much too poor to afford an abode more expensive. I have found my chambers not too uncomfortable. One gets the air, for there is an hospital and a cemetery on the other side of our street. I am well used to the habits of our concierge, and she is indulgent regarding my own vagaries. Above all, in Montmartre one has amusing neighbours.

The little journalist sipped his bock without haste before continuing the dissertation to our usual assembly about the third table on the right in the Café Provençal.

For quite ten years, *par exemple,* I have said *"bon jour"* each morning to one of them, wrinkled old Mère Fradeau. These things become habits which, being broken, disturb one; is it not so? I hasten to add, messieurs, lest you misunderstand me, that I missed the old woman just as one may uneasily note the absence of any familiar object which disappears from its place overnight. There was, *alors,* the unchanged approach to the Pont de Clichy, but

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all simply the old seller of apples, who had seemed to be rooted as permanently as the stones of the street, was no longer there.

One admits with readiness that she had never been an attractive decoration. Aged, gnarled, withered, and bent, she crouched over her basket of apples like some ancient witch guarding her poison brew. Only three members seemed to have life in her—black eyes, that peered greedily into the faces of passing pedestrians; crooked hands, unbelievably hungry in grasping her sous; a tongue quick as a rapier, poisonous as the tail of a scorpion, deadly as the fangs of an adder when she was enraged. Her arrows of repartee were all tipped with the slang of the gutter. On occasion she could deliver a very effective oration, using scarcely a word that should be understood by a *jeune fille* perfecting her grammar in French. This was a gift that won the admiration of the *voyous* of the quarter, who lost no opportunity to stir up the old woman in order that her talent might be displayed. One believes that most of her meagre earnings were disbursed nightly at some low estaminet. The remark is made without censure; otherwise Mère Fradeau could not have endured such an irksome life. For the rest, only by accident might one discover that her name was Madame Fradeau. She was known as La Goulue to the quarter—a name that sufficiently indicates the failing of greed, which was one of her more amiable characteristics.

She was a person whom one would miss, as you can see. The whole tale of her translation has now become a tradition of the quarter, so that my own curiosity was not long unrelieved. At eleven o'clock, then, of a particularly lucky Thursday, there arrived before the Café des Chausseurs a magnificent automobile, complete with every exquisite appointment that commercial instinct could devise. There was also a chauffeur in livery, a small hairy dog on a cushion, and a ravishing creature, the mistress of the dog, almost lost in the deep upholstery. Messieurs, I have heard several women try to describe the toilette of that other without success. I tell you quite simply that the chauffeur, the car, and the dog appertained to famous

Michette Poupée of the Comédie, after which, one is certain, nothing more need be said.

La Poupée descended. She crossed the street with great dramatic effect. She paused before the station of La Goulue.

"*Ma mère!*" she cried in that beautiful deep voice so well known to patrons of the Comédie. She extended sable-clad arms in an embracing gesture. The old woman glanced up from beneath shaggy eyebrows.

"*Que fous-tu là?*" Mère Fradeau growled suspiciously, a question certainly more pointed than polite.

"Oh, do you not know me?" wailed the beautiful Poupée. "After all these years, when I have found you again! Let your heart speak to you . . ."

"*Je me fiche de ce flanche!*" La Goulue returned ungraciously. "What is this game, *ma gosse?* Forget the patter. Tell me, who may you be?"

"But I am your daughter!" cried our Poupée tenderly.

"Possible, perhaps," admitted La Goulue.

"Your dear daughter—your own little Michette!"

"Then you have come to no good," declared Mère Fradeau with decision.

"And now I have found you . . ."

"*Fermes ta boite, gnognotte! Fiches-moi la paix!* If the duchess wants apples, they are two for six sous."

Yes, *mes amis,* an astonishing story. An amusing story only because it was true. The delightful Poupée presently proved beyond doubt that she was, very curiously, the child of La Goulue, a folly of youth, conveniently forgotten with the passage of years. Nor was this the most astonishing thing. La Poupée, ignoring completely how her mother had neglected the most primitive duty of maternal relationship, proposed no less than this: that the old woman should now share all her prosperity.

There was a beautiful residence overlooking the Bois, a staff of dignified and competent servants, two cars and their attendant chauffeurs—in fact, all that could be provided by the limitless purses of obliging friends who shone in the reflected glory of La Poupée. Everything that could add to that glory, or vagrant desire fancy, she owned, and

all of this was offered to the old woman without reserve.

It is not so astonishing that the offer was not attractive.

Haroun al Raschid is dead. The Nights of Arabia are not those of this Paris. La Goulue arrived at this simple conclusion. Here was a game, something not understandable; therefore something to be avoided, like the police.

"Elle veut me tirer une carotte," thought Madame Fradeau. Her language, even in thought, as may be observed, was not academic French. Nevertheless, such argot is vastly expressive. *"Allez! Pas de chahut!"* And this brief exposition of doubt and word of dismissal seemed to be her final comment to pleading Poupée.

Michette was persistent.

"But think, *ma mère!* All the long day you shall have nothing to do. There are those who will bring everything to you. You shall dress in fine clothes. You shall have food, oh, *là!* such food as a king might envy!" La Poupée pursed her red lips charmingly, tasting that food in pleasant retrospection, for there had been a time when she had lacked for crusts. "You shall never be cold. You shall sleep beneath a coverlet of fine silk. Each morning one bathes in scented water, deliciously warm. . . ."

"Assez!" growled Mère Fradeau. *"Espèce de grognasse!* Am I so dirty? *Tu m'embêtes!* As it is, I have nothing to do all day. None of my neighbours have any better clothes. I eat well when I will. I sleep soundly, nor am I one who hates a breath of fresh air. Thank you for nothing. Will you, then, go!"

Much of this, as will be suspected, was mere boasting. The truth is this: Mère Fradeau could not imagine the pleasures thus presented to her. She could see no adequate reason why any one, least of all a daughter flung indifferently into the streets, should betray this sudden interest in La Goulue. She was horrified at the idea of immersing herself in water up to the chin, and if the other proffered advantages were like unto this, she wanted none of them.

"You shall have," cried La Poupée desperately, "five hundred francs every month to spend as you please, if only you will come."

Had La Goulue been a wolf, now indeed she would have pricked up her ears.

"There you say something," she admitted ungraciously. Five hundred francs! Riches unbelievable! What would one not do for five hundred francs? But certainly there must be a trick in this thing. "What do you demand in return for the money?"

"Nothing," affirmed La Poupée joyously, seeing that at last she had found an argument greatly persuasive. "Nothing of nothing! Only come and be a good mother to me. I need you, *ma mère.* I have been so lonely. There are things that only a mother can understand. Oh, how sweet, only to say the word, mother! How I will be proud before all of my friends. . . ."

"Quelle blague, mon Dieu!" interrupted Mère Fradeau. "Yes, there is a game. But that makes nothing to a question of five hundred francs. Now, if it were possible, a little sum on account?"

"Gladly!" Michette hastily opened her embroidered silken bag, found in it a purse of gold mesh, and took therefrom a handful of bank-notes, which she thrust into the old woman's greedy hand. "There is more than five hundred, but that is nothing to me. There are things you will need. When that is gone, you will know how to ask for more."

La Goulue hid the notes in her gaping blouse. She was dazed and incapable of further resistance. Suddenly she arose from her place, the basket of apples dangling on her skinny arm.

"Voilà. We depart." With an abominably insulting gesture she indicated the gathered crowd, where each separate mouth stood agape with astonishment. "Rubbish! *Filez la place!* My daughter and I desire to go to our car."

Without one backward glance the old woman climbed stiffly into the automobile. The little hairy dog voiced a shrill yelp of protest as she sat down. La Poupée followed. In one minute more the automobile, turning widely, sped across the Pont de Clichy. Thus is was that La Goulue was transported from her accustomed place.

It will be of no avail, *mes amis,* to ask what notion was

playing about in the little blonde head of Poupée. One knows nothing about it. One may only guess, and thus conceive a dozen possible reasons, none of them adequate. Had she at last awakened to the undeniable fact that, in common with every one, she had a mother of sorts? Was she sincerely determined to share her easy prosperity with the woman who was chiefly responsible for the gift of existence? Perhaps, indeed, there was some little sin, some trifling mistake for which she made restitution in this self-imposed penance. Nor does one forget that the petted darling of Paris is a business woman of undoubted ability. Those such as La Poupée live by the word of the Press. Her action may have been prompted by her press agent, whose influence was not less than that of a priest. Certainly we consider the story worth a full column on the front page of "Le Grand Bavard." Finally, when all is said, the matter remains obscure, but one must credit Michette Poupée with the best intentions.

Of the days which followed that glorious translation one can say but little. However, there is much that one may surmise. La Goulue found refuge in the home of her daughter all near to the Bois, La Villa des Enchantées, where everything contributed to her comfort that unlimited wealth could provide. One may guess that there she was not very happy. The servants would so often misunderstand her only because they understood her language, composed entirely of argot, too well. For a day or two she would eat greedily of all the fine food placed before her. But what good is food if one has no hunger; is it not so? The baths would be a constant menace to her. Each morning, gowned in stiff silk, which must have seemed a most embarrassing armour, she sat beside her daughter in a slow-moving automobile to make the circuit of the Bois, and this, one imagines, so often repeated, gave her little enjoyment.

Messieurs, a woman is always a woman with only a certain difference in degree. La Goulue would endure all this with forced equanimity, which was far from indicating her real disposition. She had attained, by what stroke of bad luck, all the pains of position, and she submitted, not un-

willingly, although respectability gripped her as in a tormenting vice. This, also, one must whisper—not in all her life had the old woman ever gained more than five francs a day. For many years past much less supplied all her needs. However, no matter how small the sum of her earnings, there was always something for the estaminet. Wine warmed her old bones, blessed her with benevolent ardour, and was no curse to her because of the insufficient amount. Now she was possessed of wealth beyond all imaginings; of the finest vintages there was abundant supply; but mark how Fortune steals with one hand all that the other has given. Could the respectable mother of famous Michette Poupée become known as a haunter of low cafés? Delicate wines were as water to that parched throat. She missed her accustomed companions of the Montmartre estaminets, and, as you know, *mes amis,* nothing worth drinking gains flavour when one is alone. *Le voilà!* She was discontented, this poor old Mère Fradeau, despite all that touching affection could lavish on her.

So, until the night of the famous dinner given by La Poupée to M. Corneille, Director of the Comédie, his friends and the friends of his friends. The occasion celebrated the last of a hundred nights through which a noted play had pleased fickle Paris. It was also to feast a celebrated author whose latest effort was soon to be produced.

How he has genius, that gross César Corneille! Cécé of the Comédie! Genius disguised as a corpulent little Jew who seems sleepy and stupid until one looks at the eyes and sees, *mon Dieu,* what lively intelligence, *quelle joie d'esprit;* a tub of a man with the soul of a great artist striving through the burden of hindering flesh. It was he who found our Michette entertaining the patrons of a *café-chantant* and made her the idol of Paris in a night and a day. He discovered a thoroughly miserable little Michette Fradeau, whom he rechristened to create from nothing the fame of La Jolie Poupée. Many another has he thus raised from obscurity, but La Poupée is his triumph, for which the little Michette is not too ungrateful. An eye for talent is the greatest gift that he brings to his trade.

The dinner was a triumph accomplished by Mère Fra-

deau. In her youth she had been a mistress of saucepans with unusual ability. At the Villa des Enchantées she at last found her level in the kitchen, the only apartment where she could feel at home. The upstairs servants, so she considered, were insolent hussies no better than they should be, but almost at once she found a friend in the cook. They had much in common, and were thus able to talk to each other without restraint.

Alors, throughout all the course of the dinner it was noted that Mère Fradeau frequently disappeared, at first with a muttered word of apology; later, with no word at all. La Poupée, who was seated beside the famous author with Cécé of the Comédie opposite, thought only that the old woman displayed an embarrassing interest in the cuisine. During all the early part of the evening Mère Fradeau was respectably grave, stiff with concern lest the least *faux pas* should mar this distinguished occasion. Finally, however, the crooked smile which she wore on each return from the kitchen stretched itself to become a jocular grin; demanded utterance in cackling throaty chuckles for which no adequate reason could be assigned.

One guesses the secret? *Hélas, mes amis,* truth could not very long continue to wear that mask of imposed restraint. All simply, for one of the courses there had been prepared a marvellous sauce which demanded the flavour of Martell '71. For flavour one does not require all of the bottle. What? Should the remainder be wasted? Impossible to think so! Hence the visits to the kitchen; therefore the hilarity of thirsty old Mère Fradeau.

Does it become clear how presently, for the first time in that house, she was amusing herself? There was a story which she told to a famous actor on her right, embellishing the tale with appropriate gesture.

"Was I to listen to that? I ask it, monsieur? *Bon Dieu!* That I gave her a great kick of the foot, *bif-bouf,* like an enraged ass. Understand me, that raised her . . ."

Consider, *alors,* that there was much more of this, all related in the most terrible slang, poured forth with an accompaniment of hoarse chuckles as if the imp of all jests struggled for escape from the throat of this Mère Fradeau.

Certainly the guests at the table gave her all their attention.

Cécé of the Comédie, that gross César Corneille, leaned over the table to speak to the famous author of the piece he was about to produce.

"You see?" he questioned.

"But yes! It is droll, is it not?"

"Sufficiently droll! What do you think after that?"

"It is curious that she should be the mother of our Poupée."

"*Enfin,* for the rest . . .?"

"What else, *mon ami?* Her speech, at times, is a little uncommon, perhaps?"

"All authors are stupid, as I have often said," remarked César Corneille. "Now, to a man like myself . . ." For another moment he observed the merry old woman through half-closed eyes. "I see, *par exemple,* a beggar crouching at our cathedral door. *Le vrai type*—could we cast the part better? Listen, *mon ami,* how it is that she writes her own lines! One has only to listen, then, with a little refinement, it goes! You see it? She *is* our beggar! That is certain, my old!"

The author, seeing all that had been pointed out to him, granted the tribute of profound admiration.

"You look through the eyes of genius, my friend? Who but Cécé could have such an inspiration?"

"It is decided," whispered M. Corneille. "Remains but to persuade her, and that we may leave to Michette. Consider also that the man of affairs in me does not ignore the value of the advertisement."

Messieurs, thus was the redemption of Madame Fradeau arranged. What Cécé wanted, that he would have; the word "no" is a locution he does not understand. Mère Fradeau required but little persuasion. She was to appear at the Comédie? Well, and why not, *mon Dieu?* Was she not as good as these others? With a little encouragement, there was nothing she would not attempt to do.

Her part demanded but little effort to learn, and this was excellent, for her memory was traitorous. Her mere appearance was sufficient to fill the part, and this, indeed, was what Cécé had in his eye. Nevertheless, it required

much argument before the old woman could be persuaded to make her appearance consistent with the rôle. She owned silks—why not wear them? There was a gold chain to hang at her wrinkled neck, an ornament of which she was extremely proud. What! To clothe herself in the discarded rags of the vendor of apples, before all the people who would be looking at her? *Jamais!* She would not be the usual foul beggar, be that understood! She would beg like a lady, or she would not be a beggar at all.

Never, perhaps, had Cécé laboured with any young *ingénue* as he laboured in training this type of a Mère Fradeau. With that, a word at a time, he perfected her in the part until, becoming familiar with the strange environment, she forgot to act, and became wholly herself, which was the end that Cécé meant to achieve. Already in his leaping imagination, the producer could see the articles fall from the Press: "Once Again a Corneille Discovery! Great Character Actress Wins Success in New Part!" What a *furore* when he also permitted it to be admitted by him that his most recent discovery was the mother of lovely Poupée—famous in the past, but since twenty years retired from the stage. Yes; it was a story. We were ourselves prepared to give the matter two columns in that excellent journal, "Le Grand Bavard." There would be a clatter of talk on the boulevards. The Parisian public would rush in crowds to look at the mother of Michette, and afterwards gossip about her supreme talent, hidden so long, while the *salons* gabbled intelligently about laws of heredity.

You see, *mes amis,* how it was intended that Mère Fradeau should make a success, even distracting the attention of critics from the work of the author, which was of a nature to justify reasonable doubts in the mind of M. Corneille.

Alors, all being prepared, there arrives the first night, an event of importance, as must be any *première* at the Comédie. The piece was that new classic 'L'Allumeuse,' by Max Delacroix; producer, César Corneille. Oh, clever Cécé! There had been but certain vague paragraphs sent to the Press when, only three days before the actual pro-

duction, the programme was published. Flaming posters by Mugère proclaimed La Poupée in the leading part. Then, scarcely less important: "The Beggar-Woman, created by Fèlice Fradeau, mother of La Belle Poupée."

Was this not enough to entrap all the gulls of Paris? And then how cleverly the old woman had been fitted into the play! You will, perhaps, remember the touching scene where L'Allumeuse, cold heroine of a thousand amorous triumphs, given up at last to a burning love, broken, betrayed, abandoned, seeks peace in the sacred cathedral, only to meet her forgotten, deserted mother, a ragged beggar, crouched at the cathedral door? It was a scene to bring tears to the eyes of a mule. Even a money-lender with a bosom of brass has been known to weep loudly and unashamed while looking at it.

Hélas! that even the gods of this earth are not omniscient! Cécé had planned as well as a man may do. He had secured his actress, his comedy, a triumph of publicity, and a house so packed there was not even space for one other pair of eyes. More than sixty million francs' worth of dazzling jewels gleamed from the boxes. The *fauteuils* were serried rows of starched shirt-fronts and powdered shoulders. In the galleries the riff-raff had packed themselves in layers on the benches, prepared without prejudice to voice raucous approval or ferine condemnation.

And then, messieurs, after all this, old Mère Fradeau positively, definitely, refused to act her part. She would not; moreover, she could not, and the slightest hint that she was not doing well threatened to remove her permanently from the stage.

She walked on stiff as a wooden puppet with a painted grimace. Immediately she was frightened by that sea of upturned faces. She felt like a criminal on the scaffold, with every eye malignantly fixed on her. For all that, let them look! She was determined to maintain her dignity. She sat down as though every joint was a rusty hinge, and gathered her skirts modestly over her ankles. She spoke, and the words, base argot in context but in diction really genteel, were scarcely audible beyond the footlights. Her lines came from her throat with all the expression

attained by a well-trained parrot endowed with the voice of a ventriloquist's doll. Then, very decently, all in due order, the old woman walked off again, with such mincing gait, so sedately, that the grinning galleries were dumb with astonishment. The poor Cécé ruined his beard in the wings, even that sacred ornament not being safe from his writhing fingers, which could only fail to express the torture that racked his artist's soul. At the first exit he transferred those fingers from his beard to the shoulders of Mère Fradeau.

"Name of a pipe!" he cried through white teeth close-clenched. "What is this that it is? Or is this, then, what all my trouble is for? Playing the foot of a pig with the comedy! Acting a kind of a camel in silk! But you are a beggar! A filthy beggar!—not a *jeune fille* at a ball, do you understand?"

The old woman suffered the tirade with composure.

"Lump of flesh! Who will do it better, then? More than that, I am no beggar, with five hundred francs a month." She snapped her fingers beneath the producer's nose. "That for your insults! Another word, and I appeal to Michette!"

Never before had one spoken so to Cécé. He had, without doubt, met his equal in repartee. At last, a situation with which he was unable to deal at an instant's notice. A terrible resignation succeeded his burst of rage. The *première* was ruined. Even his reputation might be destroyed. That he had fallen thus between his eye for talent and need for advertisement! Luckily, in the second act she had but one line to speak and the most brief appearance. *Dame!* At least she should not ruin the great scene in the final act. In thirty-five minutes another could take the part—any one! Even the old property-woman, who had once been an actress. Cécé issued an order that she should scan the lines and make up for the rôle.

Gloomily he looked from the wings at the second act. Mère Fradeau, if possible even worse than before, was ignored in the triumph accorded to La Poupée. The idol of Paris, smiling, took nine curtain calls, but even that burst

of enthusiasm could not console M. Corneille for his first great failure.

And then . . . messieurs, you have been told that César Corneille has genius of an uncommon kind. What is genius if not the ability to twist a triumph from the rags of defeat? The kind of desperate courage that dares to stake the work of years on a theorem? That, *mes amis,* is the type of genius that belongs to César Corneille.

Mère Fradeau, in the wings, insulted, avoided him. He approached the haughty Mère Fradeau. He smiled. He bowed graciously.

"I beg you to forgive me. Acknowledged that I spoke hastily, is it not so? One regrets to have such a terrible temper, now, indeed, more especially so. Madame has in this act done so very much better. Accept, then, my sincere apology. And now, for the big scene coming, there is just a hint or two . . . if Madame will permit?"

With excessive courtesy he drew her arm into his own, and led the way into the little box of an office, a transformed dressing-room, to which Cécé always retired when planning a stroke.

One may not record the facts of that interview. It is sufficient that Mère Fradeau came forth, her black eyes shining with pleasure, a certain animation marked in her gait, the best of friends with the attentive producer. His speeches to her were as honey that dripped from his tongue. Had she been his own mother, he could have shown her no more knightly courtesy.

Yes, *mes amis,* he is a magician, this fat César Corneille. He makes something from nothing, a terribly difficult task. In that brief interval, with one little thought added to previous pains, he succeeded in making a talented actress of Mère Fradeau.

In that last great scene the beggar's respectability had flown to the winds. Mère Fradeau was herself. No more genteel accents; her voice was her own, harsh as the croak of a crow, shrill as a cry of torment in the moments of tense emotion. Ah, that dramatic meeting between mother and daughter! Her denunciation was worthy of a Rachel. The house held all its collective breath until the sob of a

woman broke a silence too intense, and, at the end of the scene, against all precedent, the audience laughed and wept in the hysteria of applause. To all of this Mère Fradeau paid no least attention. Only a moment later, in a queer cracked, comical voice, her anger forgotten, she was begging for sous, the beggar's whine to the life, changing to curses for all the uncharitable; a portrait so excellent that the mirth of the audience burst upward to the dome. *Mes amis,* she was the beggar more truly than the author had drawn her, because she was, all simply, the ribald seller of apples from the streets of Montmartre.

Imagine the exultation of César Corneille! Once again his expectation was verified. How had he worked this strange miracle? Like all great deeds, here was a simple thing. I hesitate to disclose it. But I tell you this: each evening thereafter, before the first curtain and between every act, a small tumbler of cognac was left in her dressing-room, nor would any one inquire what had become of it. Sufficient to say that it always disappeared. Night after night that first great success was repeated, Mère Fradeau merely repeating her lines, acting only in the manner which time had taught to the old woman, La Goulue.

Did Cécé know that here he flirted with danger? One cannot say. The success of the moment was ample for him. Each night the theatre was filled to the doors, while many clamoured for admittance outside. Seats were sold for many weeks in advance. The wonderful acting of mother and daughter became all the talk of the boulevards. The glory of La Poupée was equally shared with her disreputable parent. Will you believe it? The old woman never thought to ask for a salary! Fame pleased her enough. Her familiarity with theatrical customs was nothing at all. One may imagine that our Poupée was less heedless. It is almost a certainty that Mère Fradeau paid her daughter exorbitant interest on that five hundred francs a month.

Messieurs, you have, without doubt, often heard the old proverb, *"Chassez le naturel, il revient au galop."* That,

indeed, was something to be expected. Now I tell you of the fall of Madame Fradeau.

One comes to the second week of her ordained triumph. The first act passed without incident. Never so perfect was the acting of Mère Fradeau. Speaking that one line in the second act, she seemed somewhat uncertain; stumbled and hesitated over a little word. These things may happen to any actress at times. Never with such natural clumsiness of old age had she made her entrance for the third act, rags fluttering about her, grey hair in disarray, a pitiable figure of senile poverty and abject misery. Yet her eyes were bright; her first lines spoken with unusual emphasis. César Corneille, from the wings, regarded her closely. Always alert throughout every performance, delicate instinct warned him that there was something almost too natural in the acting of Mère Fradeau.

The supers passed by her, entering the painted doors of the mimic cathedral. Whining, she held out her skinny hands for alms. Then, unfortunately, one of them stumbled against her.

"Que fiches-tu là avec cette gabegie?" she demanded at once in choler. One understands that the line was not in the play.

The stumbler passed and said nothing, because the author had given her nothing to say. Mère Fradeau was unused to being ignored so completely. She reached up to seize a fistful of silken skirt which compelled delay.

"Gaffeuse!" she growled. "I demand to know why you kicked me?"

"Let me loose, what?" implored the detained one, with an anxious glance towards the wings.

"And then, after that . . ."

"Oh, please pardon me!" whispered the sufferer in an agony of affright.

"Eh bien, that's better," the old woman granted. *"Maintenant, tu peux ficher le camp d'ici.* Take care not to fall against me again!"

Chuckling, she sank into her place on the steps of the cathedral, well content with this little victory.

Cécé gasped in the wings. After all, not so bad! What possessed the old woman? Even so, the lines might have

been in the play. At least they gained a laugh from the audience.

"Epastrouillant!" cheered a voice from the gallery. At the sound of that barbaric word in familiar argot, Mère Fradeau looked up. She was feeling in a very good humour.

"Toi, de l'es brouffe!" she called back good-naturedly. *"Fermes ton bec!* Who gave you a part in this rigmarole?"

The gallery roared at their comrade thus casually worsted. Unhappily, Madame Fradeau believed that they were laughing at her. That thought was offensive. Her black eyes betrayed a more choleric gleam.

"Sale clique!" she called, determined to have her own. "I'll give you another egg to stick in your gullets! Beast of a thousand heads! You may swallow that!"

Now, for the first time in many weeks, Mère Fradeau was really enjoying herself. This was an encounter quite in her usual style. The joy of the riff-raff under the ceiling was not less pronounced.

"V'là!" cried the gallery. "Let fly, Grandma Gaga! *Rouspetez jusqu'à la gauche!* Chirp on, old cricket! Give us more of that love-making. Sweetheart, sing us a song!"

Something like panic reigned in the fauteuils and the boxes. More than panic clutched at the heart of César Corneille.

"Sing you a clout on the ear!" yelled angry Mère Fradeau. "I'll make love to you devils with five fingers at the face!"

She sprang from her place; advanced somewhat unsteadily to the footlights.

"Qu'elle est pif-paf!" chanted the gallery gods in delighted amaze.

Mère Fradeau claimed the scene. Except for the old woman, hands on her hips, swaying behind the footlights, the stage was deserted. At one side, hidden behind the flies, La Belle Poupée gestured desperately. Opposite, César Corneille danced in agony, both hands tearing his beard. Ranged behind were all of the company, white-faced, waiting for the explosion that could not be delayed. What

sacrilege! That this should happen on the stage of the Comédie! Only Mère Fradeau was wholly at ease.

"*Pif-paf* is it, then!" she screamed at her tormentors. "Believe you that one gets that way on water, *hein?*" Her voice was hoarse with the passion of futile anger. If only she had them within reach of her claws! "*Pif-paf! Voyous!* Talk when you are able to take something other than milk!"

From the darkened wings two stage hands crept out; moved toward the old woman cautiously from behind.

It was to be expected. Some *gamin* of the gallery recognized an old acquaintance. A little figure far overhead leaned out perilously over the railing.

"Oh, *hé*, kiss me, Mother Goulue!"

"With pleasure! At the end of a fist!" answered transfigured La Goulue. She stepped over the footlights. A foot reached precariously down. The stage hands clutched at her. She noticed them just in time. With that she dropped, forsaking all dignity. The orchestra gave way for her. Ignoring modesty, she climbed over the rail. The aristocrats in the boxes, curiosity conquering sense of exalted position, crowded forward to watch the progression of La Goulue. She sped up the central aisle. The house arose, shouting and laughing. Grave gentlemen in garb of ceremony climbed on their seats, scolded by women who thus were denied a view. Not a hand reached out from the fauteuils. Beneath the proscenium the company crowded forward, all eyes on La Goulue.

She had one idea in mind, and one idea only. There were her tormentors howling over her head. Somewhere at the back there was a way to get at them. She meant to find that way.

Across the promenade sped that precipitate passage. Little doors opened before her to let her through. There were three attendants in uniform.

"This way, madame," one politely informed her.

Being so constituted, she could think of but one thing at a time. All information was helpful. She ploughed forward in the indicated direction. One, never so courteously, opened wide a great door.

Suddenly, all unexpectedly, another pushed her from behind. She stumbled, swayed, regained an upright position. A cold wind ruffled the fallen strands of grey hair.

Diable! What was this? Above her, dark sky! The pavement beneath her feet! Across the street lights flaring bravely. Some one jostled against her. Out! It took her only a moment to understand.

She had made a mistake. She turned backward. Blue arms, like steel bars, closed every possible entrance. She told the guards what she thought without the least hesitation.

"Enough of it!" growled a policeman at her elbow. Of all policemen she was mortally afraid. She scuttled away hastily, lest she should fall beneath the condemnation of the law's benign gaze.

In the vast amphitheatre of the Comédie every light was turned on. Cécé tried to make his voice heard against the ear-shattering tumult:—

"Messieurs et 'dames . . ."

It was hopeless. With waving hands he herded his stricken company into the wings.

"Curtain!" he cried, the final answer to all calamity.

Slowly the curtain descended as the orchestra leader, a little man of some sense, gestured frantically to his musicians. He waved his baton. *"Va!"* he gave the accustomed command. Violins, viols, woodwind, brass, and tympani crashed suddenly into a furious wave of sound. The leader had not chosen the musical theme too well; it was "The Retreat from Moscow" that they played so valiantly, but with the general excitement not any one noticed that final touch in the farce.

Out on the street, at some distance away from the Comédie, La Goulue paused to take stock of the situation. She had no least idea just where she found herself. She thought, indeed, of going straightway home to the Villa des Enchantées but she had only the vaguest notion of where that was. Somewhere to the south of Paris, but north, south, east or west were all the same to her. She wandered aimlessly forward only because to stand still was wearisome. That, also, was not so very amusing after a while. She had

turned into a little mean street where the darkness welcomed her. Light bloomed in the window of an obscure estaminet. It was the excitement, no doubt, that made her so terribly thirsty. She felt in her pockets; fifteen francs, besides the mock charity *sous* bestowed as alms on the stage. More than sufficient! As a moth of the night seeks the flame, her feet, without volition, conducted the old woman through the inviting door of the estaminet.

René Guizet paused, raised his glass, sipped the last of his bock with appreciation.

And there, he said, we come to the end of the story. The explanation? Simple enough, needing only one more little fact to make everything clear. Mère Fradeau left only one thing behind for which she would ever have any regret; a half-bottle of cognac, found in her dressing-room.

Yes, *mes amis*, this is certainly true; chase out the natural; at a gallop it swiftly returns. It returns, indeed, with an added impetus. It is better to be oneself than to act a part, as indeed one must be, although to be natural, after playing a rôle, may strangely result in great disadvantages.

From such a calamity La Goulue was saved only because she had so little to lose. She lost naught that she wanted, and much that made her more comfortable leaving it all behind. Nor, indeed, did any one suffer either from her redemption or her relapse. 'L'Allumeuse' continued to play to packed houses. Tradition sustained it. Paris had flocked to see mother and daughter, our Poupée and La Goulue. They continued from habit, because Paris loves La Poupée, because no play had ever received such publicity before. Cécé is contented. True, he failed to make a great actress of La Goulue. But that, it will be remembered, was only the second of his intentions. It was, he had said, the man of affairs in him who knew that advertisement is more important than actors to the success of a play.

La Goulue? She sells apples at the old place near the Pont de Clichy. She has no regrets for her lost position. She has but added one new phrase to her astounding vocabulary.

"Once, when I was a great actress . . ."

In any contest of wits, that is now her final answer, the last word she uses to express haughty disdain.

THE FOX[1]

By GEORGE MANNING-SANDERS

(From *The Dublin Magazine*)

JOSHUA WHITE, a bankrupt farmer who lived alone, awoke with the sense that something was wrong. The night was very still; lying in bed listening, he could hear the prattle of the stream flowing down from the moors to the sea. But though the quietness should have reassured Joshua, it did not. After listening till he could hear only the loud pulsings in his ears, he got up stiffly from his bed and shuffled to the window. Stars lit the fields and woods; a revolving light on a distant headland flashed and vanished, flashed and vanished, while the old man craned his neck awkwardly around the little window. Certainly nothing moved in his neglected garden; he looked sideways at his neighbour's squat cottage, showing dimly in the midst of its neat flower and vegetable beds. Nothing stirred there either; and above the sound of the fussing stream there was nothing to be heard except the far away, mournful barking of a fox in the valley.

Joshua went down the twisting stairs to the door; he peered across at his neighbour's cottage, thinking that one or the other of his neighbours might be ill. But no light shone there, and so at last, very cold and curiously disturbed, Joshua went back to his bed again, reflecting that he had taken too many glasses of beer at the village inn, and making the very old resolution that he would give up drink altogether.

He arose soon after dawn with an uncomfortable remembrance of that night awakening. He shuddered as he thought of it—such an unusual happening must surely be a forerunner of some dreadful, wasting illness. He dressed

[1] Copyright, 1925, by George Manning-Sanders.

quickly, and going downstairs busied himself in the kindling of a fire. Directly it was alight he did as he always did—he went outside to look up at the chimney to assure himself that there was plenty of smoke. And while he stood looking up into the drizzle, he heard voices in his neighbour's garden, close to where it joined his own.

"Yes, he'll die in an hour for sure, and mind out, Emma, that you don't go nigh the savage little critter, for one of 'em took off a chap's finger t'other day—just like snapping off a carrot. So look out now, and let it die off there, and keep watch that no dogs do drag it away."

"Is there any value in the skin and the brush at all, then, Nicholas?"

"Now, I couldn't rightly say, woman, but I'll find out this day up at the farm, and if there is—why, so much the better."

Joshua, tremulous with curiosity, went to the hedge and, mounting it, looked into his neighbour's garden. The farm labourer, Nicholas, and his flat-faced wife stood side by side looking down at the brown, convulsive body of a fox.

"My days!" cried Joshua loudly, as he slid over the hedge, "it was that poor thing that did stir me from sleep then?"

"No, Mr. White, sir," said Nicholas almost respectfully, "because my woman here is the lightest sleeper in the seven parishes, and she never once stirred, I'll swear, all the night long."

"How come it so?" said Joshua, rubbing a distressed hand over his clean-shaven lips.

"Trapped," said Nicholas, casually.

"How do you know so much?"

"You can see for yourself, the teeth of the trap is closed on his front foót still, and there's the chain and the stake and all, that he's most like been hauling over fence and moor these three days."

"Well, then, the thing to do is to free the creature from the iron, and carry it to warmth, and give it a chance of life," said Joshua, moving toward the small brown body.

"Do no such thing, Mr. White, for I can see that it'll

not live more than a short space, and if you go tampering he'll nip you—he showed his teeth at me when first I saw him. Yes, I was just going off to work when I heard him whimper, and there he was, crockied down breathing his last—just like he is now."

"Can't leave him there to die," mumbled Joshua.

"Now, don't you take on, sir, for it's all in a way of nature, as you might say, that this poor soul has got into such trouble," said Nicholas, winking at his stolid wife.

"I can't abear it," said Joshua, "that the little thing should lie out in the wet to die; I'll know no peace of mind unless I free his maimed limb, and shelter and succour him."

"All right, do as you've a fancy to do, Mr. White, sir, and when I come back from work this night, I'll step in along to your place for to fetch the carcase away."

"So do then—but he may be alive and kicking then," said Joshua in childlike delight.

Before the labourer was out of sight Joshua was hauling a hen coop over the hedge from his own garden. He put hay in the bottom of it, and then, going to the convulsively breathing fox, he spoke to it as if it had been a child, and with strong hands he lifted the inconsiderable weight and laid it tenderly in the coop. He did not free the rabbit trap from the fox till it was before the heat of his fire. Then, gently forcing apart the teeth of the snare, he saw the foot was held only by a tendon. The cottage door was shut, the rain pattered against the window; the flames of the fire stirred cheerfully, the dying fox breathed intermittently and as if with difficulty, and awful shudders shook the once lovely coat. Joshua tugged hard at the fringe of beard about his chin, because he felt as if he were going to behave foolishly—as if tears were going to spring from his eyes. He carried the trap into his woodshed, and after shutting the door so that the sound might not disturb the sufferer, he struck at it with a great hammer, till chain, stake, and blood-stained teeth were all mangled and shapeless, then he took it out and threw it far into the stream.

Tip-toeing about the kitchen, he sopped a piece of bread in warm broth and held it against the sharp, white

teeth. There was no response. The old man covered up the coop to keep away the draught, and sat for an hour beside it, shaking his head as the sounds of breathing became more and more slight, till with a deeper sigh, they stopped altogether. Joshua bit his lip as his hand caressed the wet, little, dead body, and he told himself that he only snuffled because of a slight chill. His hand, moving gently over the dead fox, paused at the back, near the hind legs. For Joshua's fingers were making a discovery, they were telling him that the fox had died because his back had been broken—and how could a fox have his back broken?

Old Joshua's face became stern as he thought of it. He arose and went into his neighbour's garden with an ugly suspicion forming in his slow wits. And sure enough, thrown down carelessly, not a dozen yards from where he had first seen the fox, he found what he had expected to find. A thick piece of wood—a bludgeon, with fox hair caught in the unevenness of the grain.

So that was why Nicholas had been so sure the animal would die by nightfall. His hand had struck the fatal blow upon the creature, which, as a last resource, had crept to human beings for deliverance. "If only he had come my side of the wall last night; if only I'd been less drinky and got up and looked about when that warning was sent to me," thought Joshua, tormented by pity and self blame.

The labourer's wife came out from the cottage. "Well, Mr. White, how's that fox a-getting on—is he dead, or has he bit you, or what?"

Joshua looked at the woman, and spoke without premeditation. It was as if the words had formed themselves, and made use of his lips without his knowledge. "Dead! no, he's not dead, missis, why he's lapped up a brave drop of broth, and he's doing fine."

"You don't say?" exclaimed the surprised woman.

"And I just left him for a minute, because I did bust off a brace button awhile agone when I carried the coop into my place, and I came seeking it," said Joshua airily.

"So he's like to live, then?" said the woman.

"Not a doubt of it," said Joshua, beginning to move away.

When the labourer came home from his day's work, he went to inquire for the fox.

"My missis tells me he did live a brave while, but I suppose he's gone around land by this, so I'll take his carcase, Mr. White," he said cheerfully.

"Speak your words more soft, for he's sleeping, and that's the best cure for all ills," said Joshua, waving a hand toward the shrouded hencoop at the side of his bright fire.

"Do you mean for to tell me——" began the perplexed labourer.

"Not so loud, you," said Joshua importantly, and the amazed labourer then saw that the kitchen table was littered with medicine bottles, basins of water, towels, and all the odds and ends usually associated with sickness.

"But—but, my days, Mr. White, sir—what I mean, he can't live—so—so what's the use of your fussing over him?"

"He's going to live," said Joshua.

"But it's cruel to allow him to go lolloping through life on only three feet."

"Yes, more's the pity, he's liable to run lame, but that's better than not running at all."

"Can I have a squint at him, sir?"

"To be sure, only I don't want any old draught to blow in upon him. Perhaps you'd better wait till tomorrow evening—he'll be stronger then."

The astonished labourer went away hardly knowing what to think. To his wife he said: "If that Mr. White coaxes the fox to live, he's a witch for sure, for I did hear the backbone of the beast go snap, when I struck it to put it out of its pain. But maybe there's not much strength in the creature after all, and to-morrow, like enough, he'll be still and cold for me to fetch away."

But on the next evening the labourer was received by the beaming Joshua, with tidings that the stump of the leg was healing up well, and that the fox was getting active. "He'll lick my hand, boy," said Joshua, "and nibble playful at me with his teeth, that are sharp as needles. See those marks on the back of my hand, do you?"

The labourer, looking hard, said he could see the marks very plainly.

"Yes, he's that grateful to me, and so gentle, but awhile agone, just afore you came, he cocked his ears toward the door, and his eyes got red like fire, and he opened and shut his jaws and drew himself together as if he meant to force out the bars of the coop. Have a look at him now, and put your hand inside for him to lick." Joshua went invitingly toward the coop, but before he could draw off the sacking, the labourer, who was at the door, said:

"Never mind now, sir, I'm no ways eager to fret a invalid, and when they're like that, all sick and ill, there's no knowing what odd fancies rise in their poor headpieces. I'll come over to-morrow to see if he's had what they do call a relapse."

The labourer didn't call on Joshua the next evening, because Joshua had been terrifying the wife for most of the day, by telling her wild tales of the savagery and curious behaviour of the fox. It's like as if he'd got something on his mind, missis, he sits staring and staring toward your place, and his eyes shoot flame and the lips go away from his great teeth, most as if he was laughing."

"If he's gone mad—why it would be a mercy to shoot him, and not set him free with funny old fancies in his brain, that might bring harm to innocent folk," said the wife, passing a shaking hand over her bosom.

"It's the swiftest cure that ever I've known in all my life," cried the delighted Joshua, "for to-morrow, if your man is willing, we'll both carry the coop across to the meadow, and set him free to join with his mate."

The tearful wife reported this conversation to her husband while he ate his tea. Every detail that her imagination could exaggerate she did exaggerate. "And the old man says the fox have got twice the size he were, Nicholas, so that he can much as ever move the coop. He hasn't the strength to carry it down to the meadow to free the animal to-morrow, and so he wants you for to go and help."

"No fear, I won't then," said the labourer, shuddering and spilling his tea: "for how do I know that the sly varmint wouldn't leap straight for my throat bone? I've got a better plan than that—you go across and tell Mr. White I'm minded to have speech with him—important."

Mr. White came, and the labourer said at once: "Now I'm right sorry not to be able to give a hand with the job to-morrow, sir, because I've got a sprain in my side. But there's a donkey and a cart I know of that I can borrow, and I'll get up early in the morning, and fetch it here for you afore I go to work; and then you can hoist the coop into it and away to go."

"That's terrible kind— and I thank you," said Joshua.

"Aye, and there was another thing I had in mind too, sir. My missis is a bit overgone with fear about that fox— it's silly, of course, but here you are, that's the way women get. So I was thinking that if you did make a early start in the day, you could take the fox and free it miles off, up on the moors; then he'd, like as not, stay up there and everything would be all right."

The next day Joshua found the donkey and cart tied up and awaiting him when he arose from bed. He lifted the coop into the cart with a great pretense of difficulty, and then he drove away up over the moors. On a high place, where the sea was visible, the old man dug a neat grave, and buried the little body of the fox, fixing a granite stone over it. Some hours he spent up there by the grave, smoking and meditating, while the donkey nibbled the turf. He drove down at twilight and met the anxious labourer.

"Well," said Nicholas nervously, "which way did the varmint make for?"

"Straight back to these parts, and his eyes shining like stars, and lolloping like a wolf on his three legs, more swift than most do on four."

The labourer nearly groaned. "Then I might so well set to work at once to kill off my few cocks and hens, for he'll be sure to come back for those. Better fit you'd knocked him on the head that morning, Mr. White, instead of coaxing him to live like you done. It's a nasty, uncanny sort of a job if you ask me, and I'm beginning to wonder was it a fox at all, or one of those creatures you read about in books, that belong to the devil and go hunting with him over the moors at dark. Last night I cleaned my gun and loaded it all ready, but if it's one of

that kind of beast, what's the good of powder and shot against it? Why, no good at all."

Since that time the labourer, if he is out alone at night, always has a tale to tell of a great unnatural beast that haunted him. When Joshua comes back late from the public house, a small, pathetic-eyed, limping creature keeps step with him, and the drunk old man cries and talks to it. And on those occasions the labourer, nudging his wife, says: "Listen—there you go—what did I say, he's a witch is that Mr. White, or worse, and I believe it was a put-up job between him and the devil that the dratted fox should live, and worrit the life most out of decent folk. It didn't ought to be allowed by rights."

And the wife: "Yes, but you began it."

And the husband: "It's a pretty fine thing if I've to put up with foxes to haunt me, and a wife to jaw at me, and a witch for neighbour. I'm going to move out of this place, and that's straight."

And he did!

PICNIC[1]

By JOHN METCALFE

(From *The Adelphi*)

I

"THAT was a flash then, see it?"

The youth and the girl had risen from the bracken and waited for the peal of thunder.

Presently it reached them, hardly a peal in fact, only as yet a sort of flat and muffled bump, as though some monstrous troll had jarred his wooden trencher on the far horizon-rim. The curious, silent shudder of the air that followed had passed next moment. Like the giant's breath, to lose itself along the leafy tunnels of the wood, but in its wake arose on every hand an urgent whispering of trees and the affrighted danger-cries of little birds.

"Damn!" said the boy. He was tallish, a small-boned, narrow-shouldered lad, some eighteen years of age. His face, good-looking in a facile undistinguished style, was marred by a loose mouth and eyes too closely set. He wore a tennis-shirt, and round his waist a purple kamma-bund.

By his side the girl, Edie Copping, had begun to cry. "Oh, Elge," she said, "I do hate storms. They do make me feel rotten."

Early that morning Edie and her sister Ruth, and Alge and Alge's cronies, Bert and Jim, had started out with Mr. Meggeson the curate and a score or more of others for the woods. It was the annual summer outing of St. Saviour's "Social and Endeavour" and they had come by motor char-à-banc. After a noisy lunch of lemonade and sandwiches procured at the hut beside the lake, Mr. Meggeson had given the word to scatter.

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Edie and Alge had wandered far. From where they rested on their heather-scented couch they could no longer hear the shouts of their companions. Somewhere behind their heads a drowsy bee had buzzed. The afternoon had lapped them in its lazy warmth, and in the serving of those golden moments they had lost count of time. Only the sudden, ominous darkening of the sky had roused them from their dream.

About them, in the little, fern-floored glade, were visible the accessories and souvenirs of dalliance. Under a bush Alge could make out the empty bottles and the crumpled paper bag which he had thrown away an hour or more ago. Nearer, some cigarette ends and a heap of orange peel still marked the spot where they had sat and smoked and squeezed before retreating to the deeper shadows of the thicket's edge. Over there the yielding bracken still retained the impress of their bodies, and, resting side by side between the twisted ankles of an oak, there lay like scandalous stage properties his silver-mounted cane and Edie's powder-box and puff.

He strode forwards to pick them up and as he did so came a second flash and then once more that curious susurration of the upper air. "Eight seconds," he pronounced, proceeding towards the oak tree after his pause to count. "It's still a long way off. It mayn't come here at all."

As if to answer him the fronting silhouette of trees leaped forwards, stamped its instantaneous pattern on the ground, and then as suddenly retreated. Next moment thunder grumbled sourly round a distant ring of hills.

"Oo, Elge, it's getting nearer. It is."

He had returned from the oak tree and held out her powder-box and puff.

"Here, catch hold," he said. "Better get along out of this. Better get yourself tidy, too. Come on."

Together, then, they hurried from the glade, whilst high above their heads the wrath of heaven gathered. She would have run, but he, with a restraining hand upon her arm, prevented her. About them little, dusty flocks of fallen leaves fled scampering in a hollow wind, and all around the boughs and stems of trees were labouring.

Edie still cried. Her head and throat were burning, and her body shook with intermittent sobs. Alge could feel the trembling of her fingers on his coat-sleeve, but held his glance averted.

Suddenly she stopped and spoke. "I'm frightened. Oh, I feel so frightened."

They faced each other. The rushing wind had dropped, and in the hush that followed it were audible the last low pipings of the birds, held to a single faint, half-stifled note of fear. Presently these sounds also died away, and all the forest waited breathless for the coming storm.

"We're all right, Edie. It's under single trees that's dangerous."

"It isn't only that. Oh, Elge, it isn't only that I mean. You know. . . ."

She faltered, paused a moment, and continued.

"You know, you promised, Elge. You promised to stick by me."

He regarded her uneasily. Clearing his throat, he made as if to speak, then checked a half-embarrassed snigger. Into his glance there crept a look of troubled calculation, presently of apprehension.

The girl was clinging to him now with both hands round his neck. Above them, heavy with the imminence of rain, the sky had beetled like a frowning face.

"Oh, shut it, Edie. Everything's all right. I promise you it is. Let go my neck."

He tried to unloose her hands.

"Let go," he said. . . .

A sudden passion of resentment blazed between them. The tense, electric air had held their nerves astretch, but now pent-up emotion had its way. They railed like angry children scarce knowing what they said.

"That's right, Elge; that's the way with fellows. Get round a girl and lead her into wrong, and then 'Let go,' they say."

"My God, you girls!"

"You know you planned it all along. That's why you was so glad when Mr. Meggeson says 'Break.' That's why——"

"And so was you, you tart! You wanted it as bad as me, you know you did. Let go my neck, I say."

She released her grasp so suddenly that he reeled backwards, catching at a branch. The girl had sunk upon her knees, hysterically sobbing.

Alge ran his fingers tenderly around his neck. "Come on," he muttered sulkily. "It's going to pelt. I'm going to the Hut. The others'll be there by this and wondering where we've got to. Come along, Edie."

"You cad!" she said.

He eyed her nervously. His face was white. "I'm going," he repeated, but she made no move.

"All right," he said. "I'm off. Not going to wait here to get soaked an' struck. Let you get on with it."

She raised her eyes.

"You cad!" she said again.

"I'm not. Why don't you come?"

"Along of you? I wouldn' be seen dead!"

"You fool! It's your fault just as much as mine."

"It wasn't."

"Yes it was. You——"

He stopped that moment, for a sudden, searing flash that seemed to rive the sky blinded their eyes and drove recrimination back upon their lips. Next instant, with a deafening report, the storm had broken on them in its fury.

They ran then, plunging through brake and thicket, stumbling down paths grown darker every moment. The rain came on just as they reached a little clearing, and by the time they crossed it they were drenched.

They made, so far as memory might guide them, for the refreshment hut where they bought their lemonade and sandwiches three hours ago. At intervals Alge uttered a forlorn halloo.

After a time the downpour became less torrential, but overhead the mighty din went on without a pause. The lightning now was almost continuous. It gave them curious, momentary visions of a whelmed and stricken world—the drenched and spouting leaves, the shining trunks of trees, long, streaming vistas that fled headlong through

a glittering sea of ink, drowned paths that slid away to regions more tormented yet.

Alge felt the touch of Edie's hand upon his shoulder. She shouted in his ear: "I can't run any more." Next instant she had sunk exhausted at his feet.

He tried in vain to raise her. She seemed too tired and too terrified to move. Her arms were scratched and bleeding, and her flimsy summer clothes were torn. She drew his head down to her lips and whispered: "We're going to get struck. It serves us right. We're going to get struck."

Between the flashes it was dark, but not too dark for him to see her face. Something in its expression puzzled and dismayed him. Her eyes were large and feverishly bright. Her mouth was set to a straight line. She lay inert and terrified, and yet in the abandon of her pose was something curiously more than terror or despair. In some obscure and contradictory fashion it conveyed a hint of triumph.

He raised himself and frowned. For a moment he puckered his lips as to a hesitating whistle. His jaw dropped, and his gaze grew plaintive.

II

Perhaps an hour had passed. For more than half that time Edie had remained as she had fallen, resisting every effort on the part of Alge to move her. At last, however, a flash more blinding than the rest had caused her to scramble to her feet. They had run then, clumsily, for their limbs were chilled and cramped, through tangles of drenched undergrowth, along the slippery and sodden paths.

Now for a while they halted to take breath.

"It's hardly raining," said Alge presently. "I knew it wouldn't last. Come along, kiddo, let's do a scamper to the Hut an' then you'll be O.K."

Suddenly she laughed, and the smile which he had forced to reassure her faded as suddenly.

"The Hut!" she said. "You don't know where it is no more than me. We won't get there. It's going to get us first. The lightning. We're going to be struck."

They were almost the first words she had spoken since her collapse an hour ago. Her voice was toneless, but her eyes were wild. And once again he seemed to catch that curious and brooding note of triumph.

"Get struck!" he echoed in a pale derision. "Don't talk so silly! Why, the rain's almost stopped, and so's the lightning——"

He paused there, for to belie his words there came a distant surly roar. The storm, which for a time had seemed to pass behind them in a circle, was now returning.

"It's coming back," she said. "There, see that flash!"

"Look here," said Alge, "what's come to you? If you're afraid, why don't you get a move on? Come on, old Edie girl, no nonsense."

He ended lamely. His attempt at mastery had failed. He stood confronting her in the soaked twilight of the forest. Before her glance his own fell cowed and baffled.

"It's coming back," she said again, "the lightning."

Her voice which had been toneless held now an almost gloating quality.

He raised his eyes to hers. Upon her face, tight-lipped and tranced, there sat an unreal exaltation, a sort of dreadful and exultant acquiescence in fatality.

"Oh, God, shut up," he said. "You and your bloody lightning!"

His words had ended on a nervous shout, for at that instant came another flash much nearer than the last.

"Come on," he said. "I'm going to run. Almost on top of us that one it was."

He started off. The girl, after a moment's hesitation, followed him, but made no attempt to hurry.

"Come on," he shouted back at her again. "For heaven's sake, come *on*."

He waited until she had come up with him. His face worked nervously. His lips were dry.

"Why can't you run?" he said. "You say the lightning's going to strike you . . . I believe you want it to. Gone loppy, that you have. . . ."

The perspiration broke upon his forehead. He seized her arm and tried to drag her by main force. "Look here,"

he screamed, "you've got to come, or else I'm going on alone . . . Edie . . . Do you hear?"

They proceeded slowly in this fashion whilst he, with one hand clenched about her wrist, cajoled, expostulated, and entreated, striving in vain to hurry her.

"I'll marry you . . . to-morrow, that I will . . . do anything you like . . . You hear? I'll marry you. . . ."

Any answer she might have given him was lost in a terrific peal of thunder. She started then to run with him. At last and with the nearer threat of danger that tranced and stony mood of hers had crumbled for the time.

They hastened down the sodden paths. Alge reasoned that sooner or later they must strike the road by which they had approached the forest. Once they hit that the rest was simple.

III

It was as the trees began to thin around the edges of a clearing that Edie said: "Listen! I thought I heard somebody shout."

They stopped, straining their ears, but could hear nothing save the surly mutter of the thunder.

"It isn't anyone," said Alge. "They're all inside the hut by now. Let's get across this bit. I think I see a road."

They hurried forwards, gazing with eager eyes towards the spot at which his finger pointed.

"Make haste!" he called.

He had said that, and she, somehow, had run a little way before him through the fringing belt of trees. He heard her shout: "Look, here's the quickest way," and saw her pass from out the shadows of the wood and gain the centre of the clearing.

Then she looked up, and, following hard behind her at a distance of ten yards, he saw her face.

He heard her cry: "Oh, Elge, the sky, the sky!"

A second later he was at her side and looked up, too.

Above their heads, so close that one might touch it with an upraised hand, so curiously, fearfully remote that Edie's cry climbed tingling thinly and more thinly in its infinite ascent, the sky hung stretched and level as a painted card.

Then, as Alge gazed, the card began to crumple slowly. An angry, brownish light shone round the circle of the hills.

He was as surely and as instantly aware of threatened danger as if he watched the steady creeping of a flame along a fuse. Some instinct threw him flat upon his face. "Get lower, quick! Get down!" he shouted to the girl.

Next moment there came such a shattering shock as seemed to rend the earth. Although their eyes were shut they felt a blinding light as though all heaven had spouted into flame. And almost instantly a curious, deathly reek had filled their nostrils.

After some seconds Alge sat up.

From the woods on the further side of the clearing towards which they had been running came a voice.

"Gor love us, that was a wunner. Something went west then in a hurry. Look, can't you see it? Over in the trees there. I can see the smoke. . . ."

The voice was lost awhile, but presently it shouted: "Look, there's a bloke upon the ground. Why blimey if it ain't young Elge. Look, an' there's Edie, too."

Alge had risen to his feet by the time his friends came up. Three of them, Bert and Jim and little Freda Bighouse, all very haggard and bedraggled, all chattering in a nervous rush of talk.

"We lost our way. Reckoned we was the only ones, we did, an' all the others snug inside"—"That wasn't 'arf a stunner, was it?"—"Blew off ole Jimbo's 'at"—"Where *is* the bally 'ut, then, any way?" . . .

Presently there was a pause, and then somebody said:

"'Ullo, what's up with Edie—can't she speak?"

She was standing, very pale, and looking at the opening in the wood from which they had come out into the clearing. Just there the trees stood straight and calm against the sky, but from behind their screening forms, as from a hidden wound, there travelled faintly to them still that curious, pungent reek.

"Poor kid," said Bert, "she's properly done in. Never mind, Edie girl, you'll be O.K. along of us."

"She's starin' at that place I saw the smoke," said Jim. "Don't she look queer? Tell us, what is it, Edie?"

She turned, white-faced, and spoke.

"Elge," she said slowly, "Elge, that was the place where we was waiting. Elge, it was meant for you and me."

There was a pause and presently an awkward laugh. Then Alge said nervously:

"It's the storm that's made her queer. Just like a blessed jug of milk, she is. . . ."

"Well, come along an' don't stand gassin' 'ere," said Bert. "It isn't over yet."

Quite unexpectedly they came upon the road. Jim, with a shout of triumph, leaped across the broken fence that marked the ragged limit of the wood. "And look," he said, "why there's the 'ut. What price a cup o' tea?"

They pushed on jubilantly. Alge and Jim had drawn a little way ahead. Behind them Bert was walking with the tired girls.

As they neared the hut Alge caught the sound of Edie's voice: "He's going to marry me."

The words were plain. Jim could not have ignored them had he wished.

" 'Ullo," he said, "what's this I 'ear? You an' young Edie, eh? Shake 'ands, ole man!"

The two of them turned back to join the rest.

"Well, I'll be 'anged," said Bert, "some folks 'as funny ways. To go an' pop it in a blinkin' thunder-storm!"

"Ah," giggled Freda in a nervous titter of excitement, "I expect it was the storm as give 'im courage. The electricity an' that, you know."

"Well, any'ow, cheer up, you two," said Bert, sarcastically, "it isn't 'arf as bad as goin' to a funeral."

A minute's further walking brought them to the hut. Just as they gained its shelter the storm broke out afresh.

IV

The long, low wooden room was crammed with people. A dozen picnic parties, driven for refuge from all parts of the wood, filled it to overflowing. The air was blue with smoke and heavy with the steam that rose from soaking clothes.

"Ough! What a fug!" said Jim. "I don't see any of our joint."

But presently, by dint of dogged shoving, they discovered their own party, miserably packed and steaming like the rest.

" 'Ullo," said Bert, "thought we was struck now, didn't you?—An' so did we a little while ago."

A dozen leaden eyed and pallid faces stared back at him lethargically, too woebegone to smile. Five or six damp and tired girls were sitting in stolid and resigned discomfort on a form. Their drenched finery hung soaking round their bodies like the petals of so many dashed and muddied flowers. Wedged in a silent, surly knot beside a window, their swains stood smoking gloomily.

"Well, ain't you glad to see us, then?" demanded Bert facetiously. "We'd 'a' called earlier, but was detained over our toy-letts."

"Pity there ain't a mirror," replied someone sourly, "and then you'd see yourselves."

"Better than sitting in a row with faces like the backs of trams, at any rate," said Bert ungallantly. " 'Ere, what about a cup o' tea?"

"You've got some 'opes. The tea's all gorn. There's only bath water."

Outside the rain descended in a vicious fury. A stretch of gravel round the hut was covered with a sudden white and seething carpet where the drops had stung the ground and risen ankle-high like steam. A lamp was lit. It shed a flickering and uncertain light, so that each countenance appeared decayed, swimming within a sallow, watery unreality, like sick men's faces pictured in a dream.

Suddenly Edie cried: "Where's Ruth?"

There was a moment's pause, then someone said:

"She hasn't come in yet."

"Who saw her last?" Her voice rang out high-pitched, tremulous with alarm. "Who was she with, I say?"

"No need to worry, Edie. She's all right. She went with Mr. Meggeson. He'll see to 'er all right."

"With Mr. Meggeson!"

"Yes. They was together, any'ow, the last I see of 'em.

Lord love us, child, there's nothing to take on about. Whatever's happened to the girl!"

"It's the storm, said Alge sulkily. "It's given her a headache."

"Too much excitement," remarked Bert, with a meaning intonation. "Which reminds me, you 'aven't 'eard the news."

"The news! What news?"

"They've fixed it up together," he proclaimed. " 'Er and young Elge."

There was a moment's incredulous silence. Somebody began to whistle. " 'Snaughty but 'snice." Then a girl tittered: "That's why she's let 'er 'air down. 'Opportunity's a fine thing,' Edie."

"Puss, puss!" called Freda. "Give the chee-ild a chance. Can't you congratulate 'er?"

Alge stood confused. An angry flush had risen to his cheek. His fingers fidgeted about the lapel of his coat.

"Looks like a cat that's swallered a canary, I don't think."

"More like a 'am-bone that's gone an' lost its frill. 'Ere, Elge boy, give us a shake!"

After the handshaking and congratulations Alge slunk away. He edged between the shoulders of the crowd until he reached the strip of varnished wood that had served as counter while there was anything to sell. He looked up, and by his side saw Bert.

"No luck," said Alge, "not even a cake."

"Never mind the cakes," said Bert. "You goin' to marry Edie?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"My Christ, you better. . . ."

"I'd better! What d'you mean?"

He could make out Edie standing with the group beside the window. Her face was half-averted, but he could fancy she was crying. Her hair hung down her back but neatly now. Somebody, apparently, had lent her a slide. His gaze flickered, became furtive, then rebellious.

"What's it got to do with you?" he said.

Bert for a time stood silent. The rain had ceased. The

lamp had been extinguished. The mutter of the thunder grew more distant. Somewhere a voice, sardonically festive, began to sing, "Ain't we got fun?"

"To do with me?" repeated Bert, "To do——"

He stopped there suddenly. Alge followed the direction of his glance. "Hello," he said, "here's Ruth and Mr. Meggeson."

They had come in, soaking and dishevelled, from the storm. The curate's hat was gone, his grey alpaca coat was daubed with mud. His teeth chattered. His eyes were set in a peculiar, glassy stare. Just for a moment the thought had flashed across the mind of Alge, "Good Lord, he's drunk."

But Mr. Meggeson was not drunk, only very frightened. He had discovered them by this time, and made his way, still shivering, to where they stood. "She's hurt herself," he stammered. "That last stroke. A branch fell on her arm."

The girl beside him forced a flickering smile. "It isn't anything," she said, "only a scratch. Mr. Meggeson did it up for me——"

"After a fashion," said Mr. Meggeson, "only after a fashion. It ought to be attended to. . . ." His face was grey, peculiarly lined and creased like crumpled paper.

Alge raised his voice, "Edie," he called, "here's Ruth."

But Edie was already at their side. She undid the handkerchief which Mr. Meggeson had tied around her sister's arm.

"It was the branch," said Ruth in a faint whisper. "A tree was struck. It might have killed us. That last stroke. . . ."

"I know," said Edie. "It nearly got us, too. Anyone got some rag?"

Her voice was harsh and strained. Without raising her eyes to look at him she returned his handkerchief to Mr. Meggeson.

"Some rag!" said Freda. "You're welcome to my petticoat!"

The injured arm was bound.

Outside the storm had ended. A watery evening sun

showed sheepishly behind the trees. People began to scatter from the hut.

"Hi, Ruthie, 'ave you 'eard the news?" said Jim. "Your sister's gone an' fixed it with young Elge."

But Ruthie's only answer was a nervous smile.

The char-à-banc had come out from the garage. St. Saviour's "Social and Endeavour" clambered to its seats. Slowly at first, then with a gathering roar that merged the catcalls and the shouting in a general steady and incessant din, they started on their way.

For many a noisy mile they thundered on towards Hoxton.

Edie was sitting between Alge and Mr. Meggeson. Until they left the Lea Bridge Road to skirt the southern side of Clapton Common she had kept silence. Now, as the racing lights of shops and lamps began to twinkle on each shouting mouth and waving arm, she turned at last towards the curate, and in a voice directed so that only he could hear, inquired:

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Do about what?" he stammered. For a while he did not catch her meaning, but as he marked the small, set face beside him, still tranced and curiously passionless as that of one who walks in sleep, a terrible misgiving filled his own.

. . . . . .

"About my sister here, about young Ruth. . . . The lightning tried to get us, Elge and me. It tried to get you, too. . . ."

His jaw had dropped. A stealthy sweat began to break upon his forehead. A look of horror crept into his eyes.

"She told you then," he whispered. "I'm going to marry her."

. . . . . .

It was a second or two later that someone in the seat behind them shouted:

"Hi, wake up there in front. Budge up, young Elge, and give 'er room. Your gel's a-goin' to faint!"

THE FRIEND IN NEED[1]

By ALLAN N. MONKHOUSE

(From *The Manchester Guardian*)

I HEARD that Bieland was very ill, and though I had never known him intimately I determined to go to see him or at least to make inquiries at his house. I hardly know what prompted me, but I had a respect for him, and had never dismissed him into a classification. He was a competent, reticent man, and it troubled me to think of that hard surface of his disturbed or ravaged. Doubtless he was stoical, but illness and death ride roughshod over stoics.

As the saying is, you didn't get much change out of Bieland. He had some notoriety as a controversialist, and he seemed to like getting embroiled with the churches. He was scientific and agnostic; he might be called a latter-day Huxley, and he would stand no nonsense from bishops, priests, or even Nonconformist divines. He was an honest man, and I like honest men. I could almost see myself liking him; at least he was astringent to my sentimental vein. I wondered whether he would be surprised to see me, whether he would be polite and impenetrable. It was hardly kindness that took me to see him. Rather it was that my interest in him had suddenly concentrated.

He lived with a daughter in a shabby little house in Victoria Park, a suburb in a respectable state of decay which is saved from dullness by doctors and nursing-homes with all their semi-tragical paraphernalia. I rang the bell, and the maid who came to the door seemed surprised to see me. She said something about Miss Bieland, and left me in a room which was very much in the minor key. Miss Bieland looked in upon me with a rather scared air and said she would "just see." And so Bieland lived here with this

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From "Suburb," published by A. M. Philpot (Publishers), Ltd.

gaunt daughter, and presently when I was in his room with her I wondered what the relations between them were. I thought her over-anxious, appealing; he was very tender with her. Just for a minute I saw these two together, and I wanted to know about them; I suppose it's unlikely that I shall ever see them together again.

She put a chair by the bed and left us. We said the usual decent things to one another, and he answered my inquiries about his condition cursorily. I was a little disconcerted at the notion that he paused now and then to give me a chance to explain why I'd come. I couldn't say: "Bieland, I've realised that we're more to one another than I thought." I couldn't sound a sentimental note. After all, there's some advantage in talking to a friend who cares for art, for books; you can have emotions in common on these, and this brings you nearer to one another. I thought there wasn't much help to be got that way with Bieland, but I saw that he had a book on his bed, and I asked him what he was reading.

He looked at me strangely, and then I saw that it wasn't an ordinary book. He gave it a little push towards me, and I saw that it was the Bible. And then I made one of those false steps, the memory of which haunts one intermittently for ever. I said: "Hullo! hullo! You're at 'em again." I chuckled idiotically.

He said: "What do you mean?"

I felt that I was going wrong, but I went on. I said: "Oh, you're a great burster of bubbles, Bieland. I admire the way you dress these fellows down. What have you got hold of this time?"

He laid his hand on the book as if to protect or to claim it. "Mayn't a man read the Bible?" he said.

How crude, how stupid I had been! He was just reading the Bible. And yet——

"I see I've made a mistake," I said. "I've no right to assume that anti-bishop or anti-Church means anti-Bible."

"I should think not," said Bieland. He considered me as if doubtful whether to go any farther. "Perhaps you think," he said, "that I knuckle under now I'm ill, and that I shall get the curate to come and talk to me presently."

"No, no," I said; "every man ought to read the Bible."

We sat for a time in silence, and I was dejected, chagrined. Then he began to speak suddenly; he reeled off his explanation rapidly and entirely without sentimental enjoyment. He said: "I suppose I have reverted to a childish attitude. My parents were good people, and they taught me to think of Christ as a friend, a kind friend, who was always at hand. Children can understand that. I've never quite lost the idea. Of course, I grew out of the dogmas and rituals. I have not the slightest belief in incarnations and resurrections. I am not unfaithful to reason. I wanted a friend. I'm the kind of man that doesn't make friends. Don't think I'm making an appeal to you. It's too late."

He paused, and I said: "Many of us would be glad to have you for a friend."

"Yes, I force you to say it. Yet perhaps you hardly understand how a man may grow apart from other men. He may have a submerged craving for friendship, but he gets out of the way of it, he fears it, he wraps himself in himself. Why! I've read of a lonely man who made friends with his reflection in the mirror."

"It's not too late, Bieland," I said, but he didn't reply to that.

"Yes," he said, "I recalled that old childish way of looking to Christ. I found some consolation in it. And now I've constructed a kind of figure; at least I've realised a presence. I ponder on this New Testament history. I make-believe; I suppose I'm like a child with a doll. That's the way I put it to you, but I don't think I could make you understand what it is to me. I've heard it said that Christ doesn't cover the ground, that He's not an artist, not a humourist. Well, neither am I. Perhaps I modernise him a little and stick in bits of my own. But I tell you—no, that's enough."

"It's extraordinarily interesting," I said. I went on repeating that it was strange and interesting and wonderful, and I hinted at the possibilities of a closer relation between us. He made no response, and presently I had to go. He said: "I don't know why I told you. There's no evidence

that the Ancient Mariner became the bosom friend of the Wedding Guest."

Miss Bieland showed me out. She asked anxiously how I thought he was, and I tried to be reassuring. I was intensely curious about her. I turned to look back at the small, shabby house, with its poor, crumbling façade. I kept looking at the other houses as I walked away, and I wondered what was going on inside them.

Bieland recovered, and presently he was seen at the club again. He had been almost given up, and now there was quite a wave of geniality and congratulation for him. "Good fellow, Bieland," people said. He and I were shy with each other; he knew I was not likely to talk to others of that episode. My advances were gently repulsed. I made a plunge, and asked him to dine with me. He just looked steadily at me and slightly shook his head.

THE QUEST[1]

By MARMADUKE PICKTHALL

(From *The Cornhill Magazine*)

ONE afternoon in February, 1920, Mr. Manilal Gurjar, B.A., LL.B., went to the college on the hill above the city, traversed the compound gay with flower-beds and trimmed walks, and eventually reached the presence of the Principal. He had come to ask his old headmaster for advice, and also to return a book which had been lent to him.

'Politics! That is the science I desire to study,' he remarked. 'This book which you so kindly gave me argues of another subject. It does naught avail.'

'Then I am afraid I don't know how to help you, Manilal. This is a treatise on political economy, and there is nothing else in politics which can be called a science. All the rest of it you must deduce from history and geography and, for contemporary matters, from reviews and newspapers.'

The jovial, red-faced Englishman smiled wonderingly down on the preoccupation of the Hindu graduate. Then he looked round the spacious, shady, comfortably furnished room, and out of the tall window at the compound with its squatting gardeners in blazing sunlight. His eyes returned to dwell on Manilal, who spoke again, beginning eagerly:

'But I have read in English books how men who have completed their career as students with conspicuous success go in for politics, which is a pursuit more honourable than law or medicine or the Civil Service. I have obtained the best degree and I will study politics. I beg you, sir, to introduce me to that science.'

Manilal's eyes were softly but intensely radiant, making his clear-cut face a lamp of mind. The Englishman's expression, on the other hand, was rather an effect of brow

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and jawbone than of eyes, which were at that moment so expressionless that Manilal received the desperate impression of praying to an idol only painted with the colours of intelligence—an impression which did not diminish when the idol spoke.

'In England it is different. To go into politics means to stand for Parliament. There is nothing like it in India.'

Manilal was silent for a moment, pondering. At length he said: 'Nevertheless we read in newspapers the phrases "Indian politics," "European politics," "World politics." How then, sir, can the practice of the science be confined to England?'

'Ah!' cried the Englishman, as seeing light at last. 'Politics in that sense is the term for history in the making. It means the aggregate of current movements and events.'

'Exactly, sir; and what I ardently desire at present is instruction in the true significance of such phenomena. I seek the formula which holds them all together. For me they are all scattered, unintelligible; they confound my brain. I seek the spiritual reason' . . .

Just then loud hooting of a horn was heard, and through the window could be seen an Englishman in flannels driving a two-seater car a little recklessly between the flower-beds. The Principal sprang up with manifest relief. He said: 'You must excuse me, Manilal. A friend has come to fetch me to a game of tennis. You ought really to consult a politician, but the trouble is they're all seditious here in India. If you do find that spiritual reason you might let me know, for you will certainly have solved a problem which has baffled all of us till now.'

Manilal's face grew bright with pleasure. He replied: 'I thank you, sir, for such benign encouragement.'

Going out by a side door adjacent to the servants' quarters—the same by which he had come in—Manilal crossed the compound to the gate, whence, skirting the college railings, he came shortly to an avenue of tulip trees, with dusty stems, which led him steeply down into a city street.

The wide road streamed with painted bullock-carts and horse-drawn vehicles of divers shapes, most of them with

brightly-coloured awnings, whose drivers kept on shouting to make way. On either side were low shops under trees. Manilal entered one of these, distinguished by the legend 'Shamdas & Co.' in yellow letters on a blue board on its doorpost, and sat down by the owner who merely touched his hand by way of welcome, being busy with a customer. When that business was concluded, he turned round to Manilal and asked:

'What luck?'

'He gave me high encouragement,' the graduate replied, 'declaring that my quest is of supreme importance to humanity.'

'And what will you do next?'

'He told me to confer with politicians, but warned me against those who advocate seditious practices.'

'In other words he bade you seek a bird, but not a bird with beak or feathers, legs or tail,' said Shamdas with a grin. 'What is sedition, I should like to know. Define me that!'

'It is a plot to overthrow the Government.'

'Not in our country. Here it is to be disliked by the police-inspector. That is the simple truth of it, my learned friend.'

'That is a secondary or perhaps tertiary phenomenon. I seek the spiritual reason,' answered Manilal.

Fresh customers entering the shop, he went and sat upon a chair outside.

Close by there grew a splendid baobab with dome of leaves and hanging roots like tresses. Beside the dusty road it formed a species of pavilion in which all sorts of people took their ease. There was a barber on a strip of carpet shaving the hair beneath a peasant's armpits. A group of merchants sumptuously dressed, sat in a ring on stools and gossiped eagerly. Another group of lower rank was playing cards. Hawkers were selling betel-nut and *pan*-leaves, sweets, sherbets, hand-mirrors, combs, pen-knives. Beyond the hanging tresses of the tree, upon the road, pedestrians and carts in single file were moving in two endless streams, blurring the sunlight with the dust raised by their going. All of a sudden there was a loud, peremptory shouting. Manilal beheld resplendent human forms on

horseback traversing the dust-cloud with decision, heralding a carriage drawn by two fine horses at full speed, in which a lady, wrapped in blue and silver like the moon, lolled arrogantly. Most of the idlers underneath the baobab stood up. Manilal heard someone say 'the Maharani!'

It all seemed meaningless, annoying to a mind preoccupied with an idea which should provide the clue to it. He who had found spiritual rapture in arithmetic could not be happy in a world whose rhythms and tidal movements were obscure to him.

Shamdas, his friend, came out at length and stood beside him. Pressing his shoulder, he remarked: 'I know the man for you. He lives across the bridge in Hobson Buildings. He is a Rao Bahadur and a First-class Magistrate (retired), reputed wise. A friend of the police, so he is not seditious.'

'I go to visit him at once,' said Manilal.

He made to start, but Shamdas stopped him, saying: 'I hope that he will satisfy you by his answer, for much I fear to see you waste your faculties upon some problem which may be insoluble save in another life. You wish some day to make a fortune, I suppose?'

Manilal supposed so too, but that was for the future. He took some trouble to explain to Shamdas that knowledge is an object in itself, the noblest possible, and those who give themselves to its pursuit must do so utterly. To think of earthly gain was far beneath them. They might be sure that if they won to knowledge then their worldly needs would be supplied abundantly, without their efforts. Such was his eloquence that Shamdas was profoundly moved, and felt ashamed of his obtuse materialism.

Manilal crossed the bridge to Hobson Buildings.

'His Honour is within. Your blessed name?'

A serving-man received his card. Manilal stood awhile in contemplation of a geometrical design which had been traced by someone in red powder on the doorstep; then the serving-man returned and led him down a passage, through a room elaborately furnished in the English manner, on to a veranda where the master of the house reclined upon a mattress in the shade. He was wearing a beflowered bedgown and a gold-embroidered cap, and had been pull-

ing at a hookah, the tube of which he laid aside as Manilal drew near. His face was large and brown and closely wrinkled, with bushy grey moustache and eyebrows, and small twinkling eyes. At the other end of the veranda, his lady was arranging household linen with the maid, keeping an eye upon a fat and stolid child who played upon the floor with coloured beads.

The First-class Magistrate (retired) picked up the card which Manilal had sent before him, and inquired: 'To what am I indebted for this unexpected pleasure?'

'Your Honour's fame for wisdom,' answered Manilal, 'has reached me, a poor graduate upon the threshold of my active life.'

'My influence in the Government service has been exhausted on behalf of my own kindred,' said the great one. 'All I require is counsel on a subject which absorbs my mind.'

'If that is so, speak on!' The First-class Magistrate (retired) resumed the mouthpiece of his hookah. The gurgle of the water in the bowl was heard. His massive face expressed a vague contentment. Manilal told his story, seeing through the rails of the veranda a strip of waste land with some bushes stretching to the river-bank. A portion of the river-bed was visible, a grey expanse on which a narrow stream of water glanced and twinkled in the sunlight. Beyond, the trees and temples of the city rose up like a battlemented wall against a sky of pearl. The scene was in his eyes while he described his case, and when he had done speaking it came home to him. It seemed more friendly than the foreground where he sat.

He said: 'I seek instruction in the heart of politics.'

The First-class Magistrate (retired) was smoking peacefully. His countenance assumed a jocular expression, almost derogatory in so great a man.

'To understand the inwardness of politics one must enter the Government service,' he observed at length. 'By the time one is created Rao Bahadur, if one lives so long, one has become a perfect master of the science. One knows which rope to pull for what result.'

'I seek the inner meaning,' Manilal protested. 'The rest is all illusion.'

The Rao Bahadur chuckled. 'That is true. The inner meaning of it all is selfishness. It is everyone for himself. Remember that, and pay the tribute due to a superior egotism.' The sage with right hand indicated a profound salaam and then went through the action of presenting money delicately. 'That is the answer to the riddle, my young friend. He who bears that in mind will make his way. The end is rest—such rest as I enjoy. The problem is more simple than you think.'

'And yet the world is complicated and politics is the science of the world's events.'

'The world is vanity,' replied the Rao Bahadur. 'Seek not to serve the peoples: they will not reward you. Serve those who will reward you. Serve yourself.'

Manilal became aware that he was wasting thoughts of beauty on a man without ideals. He thanked the Rao Bahadur for his condescension and withdrew. As he recrossed the bridge into the town, the sun was near his setting. He suddenly remembered that a three days' fast confronted him—a family affair which could not be evaded. It began just after sunset. He hurried towards his lodging where his wife, he knew, would have a meal prepared for him.

For three days after that he was prevented by his fast and the observances connected with it from active prosecution of his quest. He spent the time between his room which overlooked a street of shops, much crowded in the daytime, and the precincts of an ancient temple by the river-bank, his wife attending on him like an acolyte. On the fourth day, being free once more, he visited the shop of Shamdas and reported his adventure with the First-class Magistrate (retired.)

'The man is old and has associated all his life with Government officials. Naturally he is cynical and weary,' was the view of Shamdas. 'I told you from the first that he could not be called seditious, and public men who cannot be so called are always either rascals or dejected. To-day I have a new suggestion for you. A meeting will be held

this afternoon in Kagra Bagh to hear a famous Muslim speaker from the North. They say he is the greatest Urdu orator. You understand that language: go and hear him.'

'Yes, I will go," said Manilal with pleasure.

He sat outside the shop of Shamdas, in the shade of the baobab till it wanted but ten minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, when, seeing Shamdas still detained by business, he set off alone. His way lay through the crowded city streets, and it disgusted him to notice how each group or unit pushed its separate way in callous disregard of all the others. This selfishness or blindness gave him sad reflections. Then all at once he became conscious of a rising tide among the wayfarers which seemed to sweep them off their feet and bear them all in one direction. Men, animals, and carts which still maintained a separate purpose became as islands around which it swirled and eddied. They seemed half afraid. It was the indraught of the public meeting. Manilal was caught in it, and unresisting, before he knew that it was tending where he wished to go.

'On what subject will he speak to us?' he asked a neighbour in the press.

'On politics, of course,' was the unhesitating answer.

Then Manilal found himself upon the brink of what resembled a huge shallow tank, of which the ground could not be seen for seated people, while the edges were all occupied by standing crowds. Windows and roofs of all the houses within sight were also crowded with spectators. The day's fierce heat was past; the light grew mellow. The multitude, so full of colour and restricted movement, resembled a huge flower-bed touched by a light breeze. The murmur rising from it seemed the hum of bees. He stood a moment, wrapt in admiration. But the steadily inflowing tide still urged him on. At the end of the enclosure farthest from him was a kind of stage, with plush-upholstered chairs and couches on it and an awning. It struck Manilal that if he wished to hear the orator he must get near the platform, so he dropped into the body of the meeting and delicately picked his way amid the seated throng. Some volunteers in khaki uniforms and fezes were

arranging people and, accosting one of them, Manilal was soon accommodated near the platform.

He sat with all that vast assembly, patiently for hours, yet no one came. The sun was setting when the leader of the volunteers stood forth and, flourishing a telegram, announced: 'Maulana was delayed. He missed the train. But now he will be here directly.'

A general murmur of acceptance hailed the tidings. No one moved. Twilight came and with it temple bells and the muezzin's cry. The many Muslims who were in the meeting went to prayer, returning in about ten minutes to their places. The volunteers hung lighted lanterns on the stage, making its expectant emptiness the more apparent. And then, at last, when night had settled in, there came from the far outskirts of the throng a wild, inspiring shout: 'Allahu Akbar!' It rose from point to point until the welkin rang with it, and then a group of men in loose white raiment were seen to mount the platform with the help of volunteers. One of them, a bearded man whose stature towered, had a scarlet crescent sewn upon the high white cap above his brow. Again the cry 'Allahu Akbar!' rent the air, and then dead silence fell upon the multitude. Manilal was conscious of a kind of exultation which was altogether new in his experience of life. The dull preliminary speeches failed to damp that ardour, and with the first tones of the great man's voice it was intensified. He uttered words which came as light to Manilal.

'Our enemies,' he said, 'appear to blame us because, they say, we bring religion into politics. With us religion is no mere observance reserved for one day in the week; it covers, animates, ennobles all the avocations of man's daily life. It is man's guidance. How can it, therefore, be apart from politics, on which the welfare of mankind so much depends? You all have heard our cry "Allahu Akbar!"; but do you know its meaning? "God is greater!" —greater than the pride of men, the might of governments. His law is changless and His judgment is for all alike. He has no favourites. We Muslims are His servants, and we cannot possibly transgress His law at the behest of any earthly government. They can do their worst to us in

punishment; it will not turn us from our purpose by the fraction of an inch; and in the end it is the worse for them. For God is greater, and everybody who acknowledges the sovereignty of God, no matter what his race or colour, class or form of worship, is, in fact, our brother. The goal, the judgment, and the law are one for all. This is the one essential of true human progress—by which I mean not the progress of one section of God's human creatures at the expense and by the degradation of another section, but the progress of mankind as a whole—this recognition of God's universal sovereignty. When this essential Unity is recognised, and not till then, will man's adventure in this world approach success. How say they that religion has no part in politics? . . .'

He spoke for full three hours, with unabated ardour, but Manilal was inattentive after that, envisaging the sky with all its stars, the night of mystery, rather than the lighted stage, and its inhabitants. The multitude had vanished from his consciousness; he sat alone, and was surprised when the meeting closed—as he thought, suddenly—to find himself a unit of so great a throng. Lamps had been hung up on the outskirts of the crowd, and volunteers held lanterns up to mark the exit. Manilal drifted with the stream till it thinned out, allowing him to take his own direction, when he went straight home. Passing through the room in which his wife and child were sleeping peacefully, he went and sat upon the little balcony above the street, now full of darkness underneath the stars and silent save for quarrels of marauding dogs. His quest was widened beyond all horizons. He would not now have shown his purpose to his college principal any more than he would have sought the counsel of an Englishman upon the subject of his three days' fast. He thought now of his parents in a country town of Maharashtra, and of how his mother took him on a pilgrimage when he was still a child. He recalled his early efforts as a Brahmachari, how he had been taught to hold his breath till death confronted him. He remembered a bright picture of Sri Krishna playing on his flute to gods and animals, which had been the fascination of his childhood. Once more he was in

tune with the emotions of those early days as he had never been since he began his English studies.

Next day, the first thing that he did to celebrate his soul's revival was to invite Shamdas of the shop to dinner at his lodging. Manilal and his wife, with some assistance from their child of four years old, prepared a meal of many vegetable dishes, with the usual rice and curry and a choice of chutneys. Before the meal, both Manilal and Shamdas took a bath and changed their clothes in favour of a white shirt and a *dhoti*. Each sat down cross-legged on a little square of board, set like an island on the bare and well-washed floor; each turned back the sleeve from his right arm and then attacked the food disposed upon a tray before him. The wife and child of Manilal stood by in waiting. Shamdas ate all the vegetables which were set before him, drank all the soups, and gobbled a great heap of rice and lentils. Then he drank some water, sat up straight and looked at Manilal. They both rose and went out to the place of washing, whence, having cleaned their hands and mouths, they passed on to the balcony, until the lady, having eaten in her turn and washed, came out and joined them.

Then Manilal began to talk about his new ideas, adopting for his text the words of the great Urdu speaker. Shamdas at first made some objections, saying that the words embodied Muslim and not Hindu doctrine, that the speaker, though a patriotic Indian, was a Muslim first and, like all Muslims, wanted to make converts. But as Manilal proceeded to enlarge his meaning the shopkeeper became as one transfixed.

Manilal spoke of the Eternal Unity which is—which must be—somewhere beyond all diversity, in terms so eloquent that they entranced his simple hearers. He said:

'I see a lamp, upon the glass of which the men of old have painted pictures for remembrance. But people gaze upon the pictures and forget the light. They think of it as far away, beyond the pictures, not as the blessing which enables them to see at all. Thus the light is here but the people are, to all intents, immersed in darkness, because they see the lamp as a restricted, distant object, and are

unconscious of the light it sheds for them to use. Now full perception of the light has come to me, and more than ever I would study politics. It is a task of paramount importance to our country, since it would break the spell of Western education and restore the glory of religion. The call, as I have said, has come to me, and every moment that I spend in idleness is now my shame.'

His wife sighed deeply. Shamdas sat silent, gasping, for a while. Then he, too, sighed, more vehemently, and exclaimed:

'I confess that till to-day I fancied you the victim of a fever of the brain; but now I kiss your feet, for I perceive that you are one of those who come from time to time to raise the people. It is not for me to reason with you. I must ask your blessing on poor men like me.'

'I am nothing but a seeker,' Manilal protested.

'I look at what you will be,' answered Shamdas. He then turned to the wife of Manilal and asked: 'And what think you, my lady?'

'I am his first disciple,' she replied.

Encouraged by such warm expressions, Manilal went on to speak of future plans. His notion was to seek the countenance and the advice of men renowned for sanctity all over India. He would take his wife and child to his parental home and then go forth upon his quest, unburdened. Shamdas approved of these arrangements, and when he had gone Manilal began to pack up his belongings.

Then Manilal lost count of time. He took his wife and child by train, in third-class carriages, to the town among the mountains where his father lived. His parents were astonished at his transformation from a listless, rather supercilious student who despised the country life to one who took delight in every phase of it. His wife described the manner of the change, and all the womenfolk acclaimed it as miraculous. When his father and his uncles asked him in a guarded manner whether he had joined the Nationalist ranks, he called their notice to his English clothes, and said 'I shall discard them on the day of full enlightenment.'

He then set forth upon his quest. In humble ways he journeyed northward to the Himalayas and back to the sacred cities on the Ganges bank, in search of men renowned for holy wisdom. One whom he consulted, hearing the word 'politics,' would answer nothing but the word 'illusion,' which he repeated often with a comfortable smile. Another stated that the light which Manilal was seeking radiated from his (the Swami's) very navel, which was, in fact, the true soul-centre of the Universe. Others assured him of success, but asked for money. Some spoke of sacred trees or herbs or stones, and many prescribed bathing in the Ganges. All praised the life of contemplation, which they claimed to lead, as the sure way to spiritual progress. Some spoke kindly to him, others were extremely rude; and none were of the slightest help to him in his pursuit. But Manilal did not despair, for in the villages the common people gathered round to hear him speak, and in the cities he was honoured by the college students. All his admirers told him to consult one man, a famous saint and seer in Gujarat. It was a long way off and Manilal had now no money. Obliged to beg his way, he could not hasten, and, as he felt that every day he gained in fame and value as a personality, it rather pleased him to forecast that he would come before that saint and seer at last as a congenial soul, well known and long expected.

In the neighbourhood of Hardwar on the Ganges, a holy place of which the manners had disgusted him, he had a strange encounter. He had been given a lift in a bullock-cart up to a certain point upon the road, from whence he made his way on foot along a bridle-path. He had a paper parcel of dry food, and was looking for a comfortable shady place in which to make his meal, when he espied a woman sitting underneath a mango tree. Her face was hidden in her hands; her attitude expressed the utmost woe. In pity at the sight he sat down near her in the shade and asked what ailed her. She looked up in alarm, but his respectable appearance seemed to reassure her, for, giving up her first idea of flight, she burst out weeping uncontrollably. She was a widow of high caste, still quite a girl.

Manilal allayed her grief with soothing words and bade her share his food. Then by degrees she told him all her story. Her husband died soon after she was married, leaving her a widow in his father's house; her own folk being far away beyond the hills. Her husband's people made a slave of her, treating her as an enemy whom fate had placed within their power. A brother of her husband had made overtures to her, and when she refused had slandered her before his parents, who at length decided to send her to the service of a temple in the town of Hardwar. Her persecutor had been given orders to convey her thither. She had prepared for death, for he was hateful to her. But by the favour of the gods she had found an opportunity to escape before it came to that extremity.

'When did this happen?' questioned Manilal.

'An hour or two ago—this very morning. I ran and walked till I could go no more, and then sank down in this lone place, resolved to die.'

'And here your troubles end,' said Manilal. 'I am a man under a vow, so you are safe with me.'

The girl surveyed him for the first time curiously.

'You do not look at all like that,' she said. 'If you were a Sadhu or a pilgrim you would not wear foreign clothes.'

'I am a seeker after truth, though of another pattern. You are my human sister. Whither go you?'

'I wish to find my mother,' said the girl, and therewith she began to weep anew. She could not tell him clearly where her mother lived.

'Well, let us walk together,' he replied.

Her tears by then were dried. She smiled at Manilal and sang a little to herself as they advanced. They reached a wider road and, after walking for a mile, were picked up by a friendly carter going to the town, which they reached just after sunset. After washing at a public fountain, they ate the little which remained of Manilal's provision, and slept beneath a shelter in a kind of park.

This girl who had no claim on him nor any portion in his life, who spoke when spoken to, but followed faithfully and tended to his comfort in a multitude of little ways, was just the comrade for the life which Manilal was forced to

lead. She had a store of songs to cheer the way, and when they had no money she would beg for him. But as the time passed he grew uneasy, finding the thought of her intrude too often in his meditations, and that to gaze on her disturbed the currents of his blood. Occasionally he was even tempted to forget his quest.

'Whither are we going? Tell me!' she inquired, one night when they were prepared to sleep upon the mighty plinth before a temple gate, high up for fear of snakes. The temple towers bulged above the walls behind them, like monstrous ant-heaps in the starry night. Below them, in the shadow of some houses, they could see a group of turbaned men around a fire. The wood-smoke perfume mingled with the scent of jasmine from some flowers picked by the roadside, in her hair. The scent was an appeal more intimate than any speech.

'I am going to Bombay, my sister,' he replied with studied coolness.

'What for?' she asked.

He would not answer. He had given her the reason many times. It was perverse of her to ask again as if she did not know. She took no notice, but went on:

'You are a seeker of the truth, but, by my life, you seek it in strange ways, my brother. Did you not tell me that the truth is happiness?'

'It is: the highest happiness.'

'The answers to some questions are in other lives. To seek them in this life is waste of energy.' For the first time in their intercourse she nestled close to Manilal and touched his hand. 'This life has questions which are answered easily. This life has happiness if one would only grasp it.'

Manilal sat deathly still, vibrating like a lyre. He seemed to be transported to a mighty distance from which he heard his own voice reply, in tones so cold as to belie his very nature: 'You are my sister.' Gently he withdrew. He felt that he had passed through anguish worse than death.

She only sighed, and spoke no more that night.

The last part of their journey was performed by train, Manilal having obtained some money from a friend. The throng and bustle of the city stunned them both on arrival.

They found their way with difficulty to the dwelling-place of a relation of Manilal's, a merchant, in the quarter called Bhuleshwar, near the shrine of Mombadevi. There the girl, who had been sulky on the journey, asked for a loan of money, enough to take her to her native place. The merchant gave it gladly, and she set out once again, Manilal going to the terminus to see her off. His heart was sad at parting from her, but his soul rejoiced.

Returning to the shop, he found his kinsman taking tea with several persons who seemed to Manilal to eye him curiously as he joined them. No sooner was he seated than the merchant urged him to tell them the whole story of his wanderings. That he did, and then proceeded to enlarge upon his vision of the waking East revealing to mankind the soul in politics.

His hearers were astonished at his eloquence and at the passionate belief his words conveyed. They looked at one another and one said 'It is quite true. The Europeans are devoid of real insight, and we, by copying their inattention, lose our soul.'

Another flung up both his hands exclaiming, 'And this is the result of English education!'

'I think it is the ultimate result,' said Manilal.

He told them of his coming visit to the saint and seer whom all men reverenced, and then withdrew into the house to meditate, sitting cross-legged in a room quite bare of furniture or ornament, save for a solitary coloured picture on one wall. At sunset his relation came and said:

'I have received a letter from our uncle Devji. It contains ill news. That is the reason why we kept you talking at such length: to fix your thoughts on things which do not die.'

'Someone is dead then? Tell me all,' said Manilal.

'Our native place is ravaged by an epidemic, and all those in your father's house have perished.'

Manilal sat in silence, seeming petrified. At length he murmured: 'Now my mind is one,' meaning that, having loosed all earthly ties, he was entirely at the service of the spirit moving him.

He knew all the religious duties which devolved on him

as the survivor, and set about performing them methodically. The merchant was astonished at his fortitude. But Manilal was conscious of the crown of life at hand for him. The hope of his approaching visit to the saint uplifted him above the consciousness of grief.

His kinsman when he knew the tenor of his thoughts upheld him, saying: 'Soon you will be consoled in the affection of that master mind. He will certainly appoint you to command some mighty effort for the nation's good.' And when the time for the momentous journey came, he went with Manilal to the railway station, bought his ticket for him, and even asked his fellow travellers to be kind enough to see that he alighted at the proper place.

Sparks blown across the windows of the flying train engaged the eyes of Manilal through half the night. He thought of the approaching meeting with the saint as an apotheosis which he had deserved by right of vigils, pilgrimages, and privations, and by rejection of the pleasures of this life. The last terrific blow which had befallen him seemed evidence of his approaching triumph. He fell asleep at last, and dreamed. He saw Sri Krishna playing on his flute with gods and animals around him, just as in the picture which had hung upon the wall at home. His wife and child were there. So also was the young girl-widow who had cheered his wandering. All were enveloped in a light of happiness. He heard a sweet voice saying: 'We all are nothing, and the light is all.' The words gave such a thrill of joy to Manilal that he was quite transported, floating in the happy air; when something thrust itself against his side, and he awoke to find his neighbour, an old bannia, nudging him. It was daylight and the train was drawing near his destination. He did not quite shake off the glamour of his dream until the sun's rays smote him as he walked out from the station-building.

The saint and seer had his abode outside the city in a grove of fruit-trees on the river-bank. Manilal was preparing to tramp thither when one of whom he asked the way informed him that the saint was at that moment in the town, naming a house at which he could be found till noon.

It was a fine house like a palace, in wide grounds. A crowd of people of the poorer sort hung round the gate. Manilal passed through them and went in, across the compound and up a broad stone stairway leading to a handsome porch. At the top of the steps he saw some people standing and approached them. They pointed to a door before which stood a man clad all in white, who, seeing Manilal, came forward and inquired his business with much courtesy. Hearing that he craved an audience of the saint, he asked him to be good enough to wait a minute. Then he went into the room. During that time of waiting Manilal's excitement of anticipation reached the highest pitch. At length the white-clad usher reappeared and whispered 'Come!' and Manilal was shown into the presence of the one man in the world whose praise he coveted.

He saw a little brown and wizened figure clad in nothing but a loin-cloth, sitting on the floor, surrounded by both men and women of distinguished mien, all wearing Indian dress, which made him feel abashed. The saint vouchsafed a smile of greeting, and beckoned him to sit beside him. Manilal bent down and touched his feet, but sat at a respectful distance, facing him.

'You wish to speak to me?' inquired the saint benignly.

'I seek your blessing and approval for my quest. I have long been your devout disciple,' answered Manilal.

Now it was the badge of the disciples of that saint that all their clothes should be of Indian homespun, nothing else, and of the simplest kind. There was no point on which the teacher dwelt with more insistence. Therefore he smiled when Manilal, in English clothes, described himself as his devout disciple, in pity for the young man's ignorance. Moreover, he was daily pestered by young people who expressed the wish to follow him, but were not prepared to make the sacrifices he demanded of his followers. He thought that Manilal was one of these. And Manilal, for his part, had so deified that saintly man that he never dreamt that explanations were required from him. He thought the saint must know by intuition all his aims and history, and what was passing at that moment in his thoughts.

'After much seeking, many wanderings,' he said, 'I ask for leave to study at your sacred feet.'

'What is the subject you propose to study?'

'Politics.'

The saint cried 'Eh?' and looked at Manilal a moment as if he judged him to be utterly demented. If there was one thing this great man abhorred and taught his pupils strenuously to eschew, that thing was politics, as Europeans understand the term. It was the game, he used to say, of cynical and wicked rulers, persons destitute of all religion or restraint of decency, who form Satanic governments to crush the growth of goodness in mankind. He was amused and shocked at the young man's effrontery. 'I do not teach that subject,' he replied with studied gentleness. 'All my disciples have abjured such foolish and misleading studies. Why do you, calling yourself my *devout* disciple'—laying a playful emphasis upon the adjective—'come to me wearing clothes of English fashion and material?'

'I mean to change them shortly,' faltered Manilal.

'That is the very first step to be taken. Then, having changed your garments, change your heart by purifying your desires and views, until the very thought of politics disgusts you. Try that, and come to me again in six months' time.'

The saint saluted in the Hindu fashion, putting up his hands with palms together as in prayer, with great courtesy; his smile was kind, and every word that he had said had been instinct with kindness. Yet Manilal felt just as if he had been cursed where he expected blessing. He managed somehow to regain the door. The crowd of humble seekers at the compound gate waiting to see and, if it might be, touch the saint when he came out, seemed to be conscious of his plight and watching him. He felt as one cast out from the abode of bliss. He found himself soon after at the railway-station, waiting for a train which seemed intolerably long in coming. It came at length and he pressed in among a crowd of people.

Six months! The saint's injunction was, for him, derisive. It meant that he was not what he had so long felt

himself to be, that he was an impostor in the estimation of the saint. His wife and child, his parents were all dead. The young girl-widow had departed. He was all alone. And, worst of all, the light was gone from him.

He had not tasted food for forty hours, and he was minded never to touch food again. The light which he had followed with such rapture and belief, which had consoled him for the loss of all his dear ones, was gone; and he was left a creature bruised and wounded by the shafts of fate, humiliated to the dust.

Suddenly the vision of his sleep the night before recurred to him; he heard again the voice of music saying: 'We all are nothing, and the light is all.' It might have been Sri Krishna speaking—Sri Krishna whom he thought of as the prophet of his race. Surely the light was there if he could only win forth from the pall of darkness which now covered him. The darkness was illusion, but the light was real. His fault was he had thought too much of human personalities, deeming them of power to help him in his search for truth. Really, as the vision told him, they were nothing in conjunction with the light. The journey to Bombay was like a fever-dream.

He came again to his relation's house. The servant told him that the *Seth* had gone to Poona, but had left the key of his abode for Manilal to use. He took the key and went upstairs. The room he entered first was dim and choked with merchandise. He went into a farther room and looked around him. All at once he gave a cry. Upon the wall which caught the window's light, there was a picture of Sri Krishna, blue and radiant, playing on his magic flute to gods and animals. The light was there, the happy light which he had seen in dream. The picture was the same which had adorned his childhood's home.

The shame of his position overwhelmed him. He had been rejected by the wisest and the best, he was an impostor in the eyes of men, in his own eyes a failure. Oh, to escape from this abasement! The light was there; the Power of which the Muslim orator had spoken, which was One for all, was all around him; it was close at hand, but he, because of his confinement in this harassed and

dishonoured body, could not reach it. There was a way. His present life was rendered worthless by the saint's decree. He could not bear to live in this condition. He could not bear to face the wonder of his kinsman. There was a way, legitimate for one like him, the way of resolution, not the coward's way.

The sense of failure and rejection fell from him. He went back to the outer door and locked it, and shut all the windows. Then he returned and spread a mattress on the floor, took down the picture of Sri Krishna from the wall and sat down cross-legged holding it against his breast, his back against the wall. He faced the lighted window, and, as he gazed his last upon that earthly radiance, a peacock came and perched upon the ledge outside—a bird uncommon in the city, and esteemed auspicious. It seemed to be the centre of a blaze of light. His life was rendered vain unless he sacrificed it. It needed but an effort, and he knew the way. Clutching the picture with both hands, he held his breath.

He had been dead twelve hours when his relation, coming back from Poona, found him sitting with the picture on his lap as if displaying it.

THE PAINTED WAGON[1]

By T. F. POWYS

(From *The Dial*)

THE people of Dodder could never lose their interest in Deadman's Tree nor in what had once hung there. And any Dodder child could always be got to behave itself if the mother said—"Thee'll see they hanging feet on tree if 'ee be so tiresome."

The hanging feet—and the children could easily fancy what they looked like—once belonged to young Walley White, a modest lover, who had chosen a tree at the corner of the lane that led down into Dodder, to hang himself upon when crossed in love.

Walley lived in those far off days, when, as Anthony Vine used to say, "they wicked man traps were laid about in wood." When Anthony spoke of Walley or the man traps he would be sure to look at his little girl Phyllis, who had been always most strictly brought up in the fear of those dangling feet upon Deadman's Tree; and who was always being reminded, when the night wind howled and shook the cottage, of the swaying body that had once been suspended there. When Phyllis was eighteen she ran excitedly in to her father from the garden gate, where she had been one evening loitering, and perhaps looking at the stars, and said—"Tommy Duck don't believe they feet be ever seen, but Willie Allen do say ' 'tis true,' and they be fisting one another."

Anthony Vine, the rabbit trapper and sometime poacher, lived in a tiny cottage on Giddy Green, exactly midway between the Grange farm where Tommy Duck lived and Mr. Allen's dairy. Anthony possessed a Bible and a pic-

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ture, and would look at each in turn when resting in his chair. The picture represented the Duke of Wellington riding upon a white horse, and holding his sword as if he were afraid of it. The Bible was a weighty one, and Anthony would open it and read aloud if any company happened to come to the cottage that he didn't like.

Near to Anthony's cottage there was a pretty knoll where cowslips grew with long stalks, so that Phyllis was able to gather enough to make a fine wreath for her mother when she died.

Besides finding the knoll so useful for the dead, Phyllis also liked it for the sake of the living. And she would stand upon it and watch young Tommy Duck watering his father's horses at the pond; or else if Tommy didn't happen to be in sight, there would nearly always be Willie Allen driving his father's cows in the opposite direction. Either of the boys who happened to be there would be sure to whistle, and Phyllis would reply by waving her hand and blowing kisses to them. No girl could have looked prettier or more inviting than Phyllis did in cowslip time, standing upon the knoll, as the fresh spring wind blew her frock about while she threw out her kisses.

Her young men now began to visit the trapper's cottage in the evenings, one from one direction and one from the other, and the first come would be the best served, that is, given the chair nearest to Phyllis, where he could sit and watch her knitting, with one leg innocently crossed over the other.

Old Anthony had no love for these visitors, for he never would allow that his daughter had any right to marry while he lived, and so, when the young men came he would stare hard at the great Duke for some moments, and then take up the Bible and read in a loud and angry tone from the book of Leviticus. If Leviticus couldn't get rid of his daughter's suitors, he would begin to talk in an ominous and gloomy manner about poor Walley White.

The spring always appeared to return to Phyllis quicker than it did to other people, and when she was nineteen she stood upon the knoll, and watched the cowslips and felt the wind blow her clothes. She had come to the knoll

to decide whom to marry. Neither Willie nor Tommy could be seen that afternoon, and Phyllis wasn't sorry, for she fancied that she could decide the better when they were away. She chose Willie Allen.

That evening she said to her father, "I don't mind so much about buying the bicycle, but I do want to be married."

Anthony Vine looked up at the Duke; the words of his daughter astonished him as much as if the Duke had let his sword fall, and had remarked loudly to the armies behind him, "let's all run away." Anthony took up the great Bible and read in a loud and angry tone the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. But Phyllis paid no heed to him, she opened the cottage door and listened. Beside the knoll there was its own shadow made by the setting sun, and in a thorn tree near by a blackbird was singing. A little further off two young men were fighting in the lane. Phyllis heard them with pride in her heart because she knew they were fighting about her.

Tommy Duck had been the victor in the fight, that had been a bloody one, and he now intended to overcome his rival in another way too. He bought a new spring wagon that was painted a bright red. He thought Phyllis would be sure to accept him, if he invited her to ride with him to the town in the midst of such colour. Tommy had already tried hat pins and a wrist watch, but he discovered in church, by getting as near to Phyllis as he could, that she always wore Willie's hat pins, and what was worse still, Willie's ring.

But the painted wagon was a new idea, and Tommy set great store by it, for it would shine red a long distance away and be noticed by all, whereas Willie's plain milk float was hardly looked at by any one.

It may have been the sight of this painted wagon as it stopped near to the cottage, when Tommy would invite Phyllis to ride to town with him, that started old Anthony in reading from the book of Kings, and also in giving out as his well considered opinion, that the hanging feet of Walley White were no more real than the Duke's sword.

" 'Tis a pretty wagon," said Anthony when he first saw

his daughter helped into it by Tommy, "and 'tis 'e thee best marry."

But even though Phyllis accepted a ride now and then, she would often steal a half hour to rest upon the knoll and to watch Willie working in the field.

Willie was often there haymaking, and would pitch a load with his white arms showing, and when he turned towards the knoll in the course of his work, Phyllis would imagine that he looked at her, and would kiss her hand. Although Willie never came to see her now, Phyllis fancied in the innocence of her mind, that the reason for his not coming was only that he was sure that she loved him, and that he merely left it to her to fix the day for the wedding.

On coming in one evening after catching his rabbits, and before taking up his Bible to read the second epistle general of Peter, Anthony Vine told his daughter that he had met someone who still believed that the feet of Walley could be seen dangling from the tree in the darkness.

" 'Tis all silliness," said Phyllis.

"Willie Allen do say 'tis true," replied Anthony. . . .

When the autumn came Phyllis decided that she would marry Willie at Christmas, but she didn't wish to tell him so, until she had bought her wedding clothes, because she knew that as soon as the truth of her choice was out, her rides in the painted wagon would end.

She wished to go to the town once more and she went. Anthony watched the start as usual, and when he saw Tommy Duck kiss his daughter after helping her in, he decided to begin reading the Acts of the Apostles that same evening for his own pleasure.

When the painted wagon passed under Deadman's Tree Phyllis was surprised to see a paper pinned upon the trunk, the same sort of paper that folk spoke of as being pinned there by Walley in the time of the man traps. The girl saw written upon the paper her own name "Phyllis."

"Oh, it's only Willie's silliness," she said, and Tommy drove on.

On the way to town Phyllis was settling in her own mind to go and visit Willie at his home that same evening.

"It's leap year and so I may ask him to marry me," she

said to the noise of the painted wheels as they spun round.

Heavy clouds gathered in the sky that afternoon, as if winter intended to hide under the cover of darkness all the ill things he was bringing to mankind. For some reason or other Tommy Duck didn't leave the town as early as usual. He carried no light, and when the painted wagon neared Deadman's Tree, neither Phyllis nor he spoke one word.

Phyllis never knew how she came to do it, but when she was exactly under the tree she held up her hands to feel if anything was there—and felt two dangling feet. She screamed with horror and the horse galloped, and the red wheels spun. Later in the evening when Phyllis went to the dairy to ask for Willie, she was told that he had led a black bull to market very early in the morning and that he hadn't so far returned. . . .

In Dodder the folk stood about in groups talking in hushed tones about Willie Allen; and when Anthony brought the news to his daughter, he said, "Willie Allen did always say 'twere a true story, and 'e've been and hanged himself same as Walley did to prove 'twere true."

Phyllis fainted.

Willie had only been buried a little more than three months, when Phyllis said to Tommy Duck—"Father do read Numbers now, and so 'tis best we be married."

But Tommy excused himself.

"I can't marry no girl who have ever touched they dangling feet," he said.

And Phyllis, after watching Tommy drive off alone in the painted wagon, turned mournfully to the knoll and gathered a bunch of cowslips for Willie's grave.

THE ESCAPE OF SAEMUNDR[1]

By WILL SMITH

(From *The New Statesman*)

IN the year 1075 the devil became tired of wandering in the void and settled down in a Southern country to teach the black arts. He set up a school, to which the nobility sent the flower of their youth. The devil is not, as some erroneously imagine, a twin-headed dragon with a forked tail, nor even a quaint figure like Chaliapin as Mephistopheles. On the contrary, he is a tall, well-built old gentleman, with a strangely noble face, dark searching eyes, and flowing white beard. The bald spot on his crown is covered by a tight-fitting skull cap, and he wears a long black gown with shiny tassels, and soft leather shoes with the toes turned up in eastern fashion. He has always had one great sorrow—his ineligibility for marriage. For very dearly he desires a son to call his own. Several times he has tried his subtle wiles, but so awful is the knowledge he possesses that no one knowing him can help but loathe him. Try to imagine the eternal unrest throughout thousands of centuries he must have experienced. The searing knowledge that what the merest mortals deem a commonplace, is to the Black Master a thing unattainable, an impossibility, yet something to be longed and hoped for.

When Frodi Sigfusson died, Saemundr, his eldest son, shared the estate between his three brothers and departed from Oddi to seek his fortune abroad. He was at seventeen a well-built, comely lad. Masses of wavy golden hair surmounted perfectly chiselled features. His heart and mind were clean, young and fearless. Thus he came to the Southern country where the Black Master kept his school.

[1] Copyright, 1925, by Will Smith.

The devil asked in payment for a five years' course the whole of his fortune, to which Saemundr readily assented, and in a few months the apt pupil had progressed wonderfully at the hands of so great a teacher. One morning the devil espied Saemundr strolling in the garden, and the rising sun shone on his golden hair. Naked except for a loincloth, he excelled as a figure of strong, virile youth. The old man wrung his hands in anguish as the great yearning for a son came over him once more. He pictured the young man as the possible embodiment and reincarnation of himself in a cleaner and fairer form. Sitting there morning after morning from then on, he watched in secret the glory of his affections. Saemundr never imagined for one moment the real object of the old man's devotion for him. The devil taught him how to read the stars, to foretell the weather by the cock's crow, how to make pigs go mad and turn salt water into finest wine. So much did the young man learn that he even forgot his own identity, and believed it was true, when the Black Master told him, he was his son "Kollr."

About this time Saint Jón, who had known the boy of old, happened to be travelling in that country and sought him out. Saint Jón was a very foul, dirty old man, in a brown cassock covered with the dust of thousands of weary miles. His hair was unkempt, his face haggard from fasting. The lad would not at first believe he had even seen him before. But Saint Jón, despite his dirt, was a good-hearted enough man. He persevered, and visited the young scholar in secret again and again, and at last he persuaded Saemundr to return to his right senses. He suggested that they should escape together. Accordingly they laid their plans with that singular ingenuity of which the boy had learnt so much of late.

The devil never sleeps. That same night it was very rough and stormy. The clouds suppressed the moon and the rain came down in fitful gusts. Sometimes it poured down in earnest, then as suddenly became gusts of spray in the path of the living wind. It was just such a night as ever pleased the wayward old man; dressed in nothing but his gown and skull cap, he hurried out.

Gleefully he wended his way up hill and down dale. His white beard tossed in the wind, and the rain ran in little rivers down the black robe. Peeping in at rich men's houses he espied them huddled over the fire, and into the hovels of the poor where they slept peacefully. Then, laughing and chuckling, he pursued his way. For countless centuries he had wandered thus. It was the zest of life to him; the old man found enjoyment in Nature only in her wild, reckless moods. Like his own mind, a tremendous whirlpool of conflicting elements, so were the forces of Nature unleashed that night.

Towards morning the rain ceased, the sky grew clearer, and stars showed in the ever-changing patches of blue. The devil lay down on a grassy bank and began idly to study the stars.

The stars shone out in the now clear sky, as Saemundr and Saint Jón urged their ponies towards the coast. The tang of the salt was in the air, though as yet they had five miles to cover ere they reached the waiting ship. Ever and anon the lad cast his eyes heavenwards, anxiously, to the stars.

The good Saint Jón, who knew little and guessed less of the powers of magic, complacently congratulated himself upon saving the son of his old friend. Not very far now and they would board their good vessel, and then, under the patronage of Father Neptune, they would set sail for home.

A vision of the Needles off Portland Head, as he had last seen them seven years ago, their summits hidden in the low storm clouds, their base in the dancing spray, rose before him. Yes, the good Saint Jón was glad to be going home, the more so by reason of the fame and honour that would greet this, his latest enterprise.

Suddenly he felt the lad shaking him by the shoulder and, looking around, discerned his face pale with excitement as he pointed with his finger to the sky.

"My master is now on his way and sees where we are; this have I read in the stars."

The old man was greatly perturbed and asked what was to be done.

"Take off one of my shoes, fill it with water, and place it on my head," was the reply. Jón did so.

The devil, looking up into the heavens, beheld the reflection of the water. In that moment he experienced the most awful feeling of desolation even he had ever known. Gone were his cherished hopes, blasted at the point of fulfilment.

"The stranger has drowned my foster son, Kollr, for there is water round his star."

Sadly he retraced his steps homewards, nor did he look upwards into the heavens again that night. When all was safe the two continued their journey.

In this way Saemundr, surnamed Frodi, returned to his home and future greatness.

STORM[1]

By L. A. G. STRONG

(From *The Golden Hind*)

SCOWLING blackly, muttering to himself, he strode along the rough lane that led to the open moor. As soon as he could, he left it, taking the shortest way up a steep slope dotted with squat furze bushes. He climbed powerfully, forcing his way upwards with savage thrusts of his thighs, plunging his feet down into the soft turf with all the strength of rage that was in him; bending forward to get the fullest measure of his power, heedless of the sultry sky and the sweat leaping out on him at every step.

In a couple of minutes he had reached the top, and, relieved from the pressure of the slope, swung along like a cloud. A little fitful breeze sprang up and touched his forehead, and even in his black mood he half consciously acknowledged its caress. Yet there was that in him which was intolerant of ease or relief, and made him press on fiercely, with great tearing strides. The main road lay two hundred yards ahead. His legs ate up the distance, as though by very will-power he could reach out and clutch it towards him; soon his hobnailed boots rang out in three sudden steps upon the road, and with a run and jump were hushed upon the turf beyond.

Two old men were mending the road a little further down. The voice of one came up clearly on the oppressed air.

"Stoorm be comin' up, I reckon, Joe," it quavered. Deeper, less clear, another answered it.

"Aye . . . bit thundersome, like . . ."

[1] Copyright, 1925, by L. A. G. Strong.
Courtesy of Basil Blackwell, Esq.

But the walker scarcely heeded them, or the coming storm they spoke of. Though the sun was shining sickly and uneasily, as if it had done something it was ashamed of, and though sullen clouds, with edges delicate as the fronds of maidenhair, were gathering over the valley from opposite quarters of the sky, and the birds twittered forlornly or with shrill alarm, he strode on in his shirt-sleeves deeper and deeper into the moor.

Why should one yearn all earth and heaven towards a woman when she was near by, and lose her clean out of mind when she was away? Why the hell? Nay, still more, why should a woman be different in the very soul of her, when she was gone and when she was to hand? That was the biggest question of all. When she was to hand, placid, yes, easy, yes, ready to please, yes, never a one to assert herself—she was all that; damn it, she didn't complain of anything, she seemed happy enough, you wouldn't think she had a complaint in her. Yet, no sooner would he be gone, and the urgency of her out of his mind for the time—and that was a good job, for no man could live long at that pitch—than there would come a letter, full of God-knows-how-many whinings and complaints. Why had he said this and that (which he never remembered saying); why had he done this and the other (which he never minded doing); and why had he left this undone, or put such and such a slight upon her, and criticised her shortcomings, when no such things had been in his mind at all. When a man was with her, she was all smiles and yielding. Once he was gone, there wasn't a thing of all the things he had done or not done that she couldn't turn into a reproach against him.

Not a good, angry complaint, mind ye—he stumbled over a stone, and swore—but a little whining soft complaint. I know I'm not good enough for you, and I'm willing to be the dirt beneath your feet, but you needn't be mocking at me and turning my humble love to scorn. The hell!

Bile rose in his throat, bitter under the tongue, and he ground his teeth and swallowed grimly. Too damned placid, that's what she was. Why couldn't she have a respect for herself, and stand up to a man? But she couldn't, not in

flesh nor on paper. Only nag, nag, nag, complain, complain, complain; and she hadn't even the courage to do that to a chap's face. No: nothing to his face. Once, when his feelings had been too strong for him, and he had gone a bit far —torn her bodice a bit—she had placidly pinned it up and sat looking at him with that silly smile of hers. Damn it, if she'd up and spoke her mind, fetched him one in the mouth, perhaps—why, then a man could shout, a man could laugh, take the adorable little vixen in his arms and crush and kiss her into submission. A clean fight, if fight must be, and a fiery passion to match his own—that was the woman for him. He wanted a telling off, now and then: he'd take managing from a woman that knew her mind and spoke it, but what use was violence and passion against a mere unresisting sheep of a woman who never struggled nor put up fight at all? No, nothing at the time, but all of it weakly afterwards in a letter. "I suppose it is only natural you can't respect me and treat me respectful as a girl should be treated, I'm so much below you. Give in to you too much, I have, and that is my reward, that you treat me like a low woman off the streets."

What did she know about women off the streets? It would serve her right if—. Words and talk, that was all, names and words and talk.

Just such another letter in his hand now. He straightened out the crumpled paper as he walked. The sweat from his palm had blurred some of the ink. No matter—a chap didn't want to read all that witpot again. All of it the same; complaining of this, that, and the other: but she'd done it once too often this time. By God, she had. Other times, he hadn't seen her within a day or so of a letter, and when they'd met his anger had cooled and her attraction for him had killed what was left of it. The moment he saw her it all melted, giving place to another fire her nearness never failed to kindle. And he resented this fire, hated and fought against his passion for her, since he did not need his mother to tell him, again and again, that Daisy was not suited to him and that there could be no peace in such a love. Yet Daisy loved him, and—when his arms were round her—he loved Daisy. Each

time he saw her his doubts were stilled, only to quicken like a litter of snakes, once the turn of the lane had hidden her from his sight.

But not this time. This time was different. This was to be the last of all. Her letter had come, when by a good chance there was nothing to do at the shed till a load of timber should come in after midday; and he had started off at once in the first heat of his anger to see her and be done with it. Thus he plunged along, the sweat running down his loins, under a sky that matched his mood. Nay, everything around him seemed to confirm his anger. Even as he tore along, he found time for a little surprise at himself, admiration for the persistence of his own wrath, which was generally a quick fire, blazing up and soon dead, like a gorse bush in March. But now the arid, lowering sky seemed to beat his own flame back upon himself; flame engendering flame.

A car stuttered along the road, which was now a good two miles behind him. It hooted sharply, perhaps at a pony straying in its path, and he heard with surprising clearness the noise it made changing gears on Merivale Hill. Roused slightly to his surroundings, he looked around. The sun was almost hidden: the sky was pale and leathery, and the black clouds towered above the valley. Well—let it rain. So much the better.

Over the next rise, and he would be in sight of the house. Not long, now. Grimly he set his thighs to this last effort, and grimly they answered. One minute, now. His head swung over the sky line. There—there she was—the fool—of all things—hanging out clothes to dry. With a thunderstorm just coming on. The crack-brained fool.

When would she see him? He raced noiselessly over the space between, to get as near as might be to her before she saw. Hanging out washing to-day. My God, what a fool.

She was hidden behind a sheet. There was difficulty with it: it wouldn't stay up. Placidly she contended with it, and conquered it.

Near the gate now. Damn it, too late. She had looked up and seen him.

For an instant she stared, unable to believe her eyes: then she ran joyfully to meet him.

"Dave!" she cried. "My Davey! What brings 'ee here this time o' day? Come in, come in! I be that glad to see 'ee."

For a moment, at the sight of her, he felt himself grow weak, his loins relax, everything fade but the old craving to take her in his arms. Then he felt this very urge blacken and curdle and go sour within him: the innocence of her welcome, as though she had written no letter to him, her obtuseness to what had so sorely angered him, brought back his sullen fury tenfold. He stood scowling on her.

"This here is what brings me."

He held out the crumpled letter: but, in the shock of her first surprise, she did not notice, talking on happily to him, waiting for no answers to her questions.

"Come in, come in, sit down, and take a glass of cider to cool 'ee after such a long walk in this heat. Come in, come in——"

"This here is what brings me!" He cut her short, speaking the words harshly and loudly, holding out the letter in her face.

She looked at it, not yet aware of his anger.

"Oh aye, my letter, but never mind that now, 'tis so nice to have 'ee here, so unexpected and all."

Was the maid mad? Had she no sort of sense?

"I repeat, this here is what brings me." He swallowed hard, and glared at her, with an awkward tightness at the corners of his jaw. "In this here letter you lay several complaints to me about my conduct. You charge this against me, and that against me, saying I've served you inconsiderate and failed in respect to you, and such like."

He stopped, and swallowed again, while she stared in surprise at him.

"Every time after I've been with you, or 'most every time," he continued, his voice now deliberate and controlled, "you write me a letter of this sort, charging such manner of conduct to me. I've bore enough of it. I'm not a-going to stand it no more."

Comprehension came at last to her. She leaned her fair

head back a little, a gesture that was invariable with her if any creature was to be soothed, from a frightened chicken to a human. The gesture he had loved insulted his anger now.

"Oh, that letter. Davey dear, don't mind none of it, don't pay no heed to it. It don't signify a bit! Come in, do 'ee, have a glass of cider and——"

"If it don't signify, where in hell's the sense of writing it?"

"Davey dear, never mind. Come in and——"

"And, if it don't signify, where's the sense of writing it every bloody time?"

Her eyes stared a little at the oath, but she made no comment.

"Davey dear——"

"Saving that up for the next letter, I suppose? 'You use bad language to me as if I was a common woman off the streets,' " he mimicked, in exaggerated falsetto. "Wouldn't say it to my face, would you? Oh no, keep it to put 'pon paper. Bah!" He spat on the grass.

Tears gathered in her big grey eyes.

"Davey dear, I was wicked to write they letters, I should't've said it. But you don't know what it feels like, alone here, with only father. I haven't a mother to help me and advise me. I only—it's only after you've gone—that—that I remember what she told me——"

She was crying now.

"What she told you? When? What did she tell you?"

"B—before she died."

There was a pause. He must not be cheated of his just anger. Crying. Damn women. A hundred ways they had to sap a man's strength.

"Well, you can just make up your mind once and for all, your mother or me. Either you stop writing me letters like this, or I see you no more again, never. Either you stop—but, damn it, you won't stop," he shouted suddenly, "you won't stop, you can't stop, it isn't in you, you cruel she-devil, you. You'll fault me, and dig at me, and reprove me, and lay it all on your dead mother in her grave. And it's you, it's you, it's you," he repeated, conscious of his

own injustice, and the more furious because of it: "all the time it's you, and none other!"

A few big drops of rain fell, and even in the midst of her agitation he saw her glance anxiously round at the clothes on the line. Bloody Martha! He stepped close to her, and she looked round to find his red sweaty face a few inches from her own.

"Davey dear." She stretched up her arms, to put them round his neck.

"*Davey, dear!*" He tore her hands away. "Aye. Damn fine. Davey dear when I'm by, and devil ill treating of a poor motherless maid when I'm away, eh! One of these days I will ill-treat you—I——"

His fingers were biting into her plump smooth shoulders, and suddenly, in a realisation that shocked him, he felt for the first time how passionate love can turn to lust for sheer cruelty. He felt half pleased, half horrified.

Daisy straightened herself up, and looked into his face with a dignity he had never seen in her before.

"Very well," she said quietly and simply. "Hurt me then, if you want to. Hurt me."

He grinned down at her stiffly, with a dry mouth.

"Clever enough. Clever enough. You know how to put a man in the wrong, don't you?"

With a gesture so sudden that it surprised him, he let her go, and stood clear from her. Then he turned on his heel and strode away.

That's all, all over. He hadn't hurt her. She couldn't say that. Walk away and leave her. That's the best way.

Oh, yes. Run after me. He strode his fastest. That's good for her. That'll make her fine bosom shake.

She was close behind him now. Well, she'd had a run for her money. He dodged once or twice till the childish indignity of it struck even him, and he stopped and faced her.

"Well," he said, "and what now?"

"Davey dear," she panted. "Don't go off from me like that—I can't bear it. Hurt me—serve me out—only don't go off and leave me. Hurt me—I want you to."

She clung to him panting. Her blouse had come open a

little in front, he could see her breast heaving, close against him. Her breath came on his face in warm sweet gusts. All his body reeled towards surrender. One moment more, and he was gone.

He seized her shoulders and held her away from him. In her breathlessness, her head fell back, showing her parted lips and nostrils. He shut his eyes.

"No—you—don't," he said slowly.

She was really frightened now, she was clinging to his arms.

"No—you—don't."

"Davey—hurt me, beat me, anything, but open your eyes. Davey—you look awful. Open your eyes. Davey—Davey! Davey!" She screamed, tearing free a hand, and beating frantically at his face.

He smiled grimly, setting his face as against a hailstorm. What happened when one put forth one's full strength against a woman? Would she break? Would she hit her head on a stone and be killed? Well, she had a sporting chance, his eyes were shut.

Shifting his feet warily till he felt a good grip, he poised the distraught girl, took breath, and with the full deliberate might of all his body flung her from him. He heard the soft thud of her collapse and the little hiccuping cry it jerked from her. She hadn't hit a stone; good for her.

Then he turned his back on the sound, opened his eyes, and began to run. To run; just quickly at first, then furiously down the rough slope of the moor. That was the way—shut your eyes. Then they couldn't get you. Who was the chap he'd heard of at school who stopped up his ears? Never mind: better to stop your eyes. Davey, dear. No, stop both, best of all.

He ran wildly, leaping over stones and bushes, shouting to startled ponies, laughing with what breath was in him.

"Davey dear. Da-avey dear!" he called as he flew down a steep place in great reckless strides. He'd break his leg if he put a foot down false. Never mind. Never—— An enormous raindrop hit him in the eye so suddenly that he paused disconcerted, rubbed it clear, and looked up at

the sky. For a moment he was sobered, for its aspect was appalling.

On a background that in some places was the colour of a wet lead roof, and in others a livid orange, great masses of cloud, blue, dove-grey, and black, moved restlessly. Over the valley a veritable tower of cloud continued to pile itself up into a solid mass. Smaller fragments from time to time clung to its edges, or broke swiftly from it. On his right a mass of violet and deep angry blue was tossing and shaking its edges, as a petulant woman her skirts: then, in a minute, it was as though she gathered them apprehensively around her legs. A cloud across the valley, that had been moving uneasily about as if uncertain where to go, stopped as he watched it, seemed to hover, and suddenly swooped earthwards, blotting out all beneath it in the dark feathery smudge of its disintegration. A cold breeze came up towards him from the valley, as if all the air there were trying to get away, before that huge imminent bulk of cloud came down; and the whole earth seemed to be crouching, eyes half shut with terror, in anticipation of the terrific flash which should let loose the storm.

Then Dave laughed once more, breaking the spell which held him, and plunged onwards. Let it come down, a wild weather suited to his mood.

"I'll race ye," he yelled to the lowering sky. "I'll be below in shelter before ye come down, see if I don't."

And he ran on even faster.

The road was below him, a staring ribbon. No sign of the two old men. They were well under cover, he thought, by now; and he spared time to chuckle, thinking of the consternation with which, from a chink in their retreat, they must be viewing so portentous a sky. Damn the day: sweating did you no good, a day like this. The hot air pressed upon a man: the sky was a pot of brass, rammed down on his temples. Aha, the road. Hullo, his legs were going a bit. Well, small wonder, you run nearly three miles, old boy, and you out of training and all; what would old Harry Greenwood say, good old Harry—damn rough going here, go easy—damn—go easy—damn—easy, man, easy! Blast it all, you was nearly over then.

He was breathing painfully in great gasps, and the sweat was running into his eyes and blinding him. Ease up on the slope, can't see where you're going, damn it all, break your bloody leg in a minute.

He had found the track now, and was stumbling along it, panting and talking to himself incoherently. He knew he was because he could hear himself. Done up a bit, old boy; all right, after a rest.

Dark. He lifted his streaming face and looked up at the sky. Black—good God—black as ink, like a nigger's face looking down.

Then, as he looked, the sky grinned suddenly and evilly at him. He put his hand up to his eyes, and staggered. With a rattle as of all the steeples in heaven cracking and crashing down, the storm broke, and with it, in a glaring hissing flood, the rain. Half blinded by the lightning, and deafened by the thunder, Dave cowered before the rain in sheer incredulous horror. It hit him in the face like water slapped on him by derisive devils from a bucket. There wasn't, there couldn't be such rain. It was a river, he'd fallen in a river. Holy God, he'd be drowned. Keep your head down, you'll be drowned else.

Rain. A white, gleaming, roaring wall of rain, blotting out the land. Even the incessant lightning was only a dazzle on the rain, like light shimmering through the slits of a Venetian blind, and above the steady roar of the rain the thunder could scarcely be distinguished.

Then, abruptly, it lifted, dwindled to nothing: and David, with the roar of it in the woods below him, found himself crawling laboriously on hands and knees towards the shelter of a little group of bushes, in an atmosphere the colour of pea soup.

Better now. Cautiously he raised himself, and at last stood, barely able to support the weight of his dripping clothes. Better: it had eased off a bit. Not all over yet, though, not by a long chalk. You could almost write with chalk on that sky, it was black enough. Of course, the lightning did that, didn't it? Of course. That was the chalk. Funny thought, that. Never had a thought like that before.

The darkness thickened, and suddenly everything was hideous blazing light; and David had time to see a tree just in front of him, every branch agleam like pale silver, topple slowly over and subside. Then he fell into blackness.

Hundreds of catherine wheels of many colours were being sprayed up from a fountain in long curves. They made a whirring noise, mm-m, mm-m. They were pulling the blood in a chap's head, yes, they were most certainly pulling the blood in a chap's head, all up into a point. Unbearable tight pain, hard luck on a chap, soon it will burst. Gup—phisss—ss—ss! It's burst, those are its drops spattering his face. No, it's cold, and blood drops would be hot, wouldn't they, yes of course. It's rain, cold rain. The storm isn't over then, no, but it's better, it isn't so heavy, that rain isn't, because he is face uppermost and if it was like it was before he'd be drowned—perhaps you are anyway, Dave.

Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have——

Where was he? For a moment he couldn't get up: then he battled through some dripping foliage, and stood up unhurt. The sky was clear, the rain was gone: under the sun the drenched landscape winked and glittered, and a thousand birds carolled wild thanksgiving for their deliverance from the storm.

Weak, but wonderfully clear in mind and spirit, he staggered out on to the track, his strength coming back with every step he took. A lark shot madly up in front of him, filling the sky with a delirium of praise. Then sudden remembrance came to him, and he stopped in horror. Daisy!

All his bile and bitterness of rage had gone with the storm: sane and clean, he was appalled to recollect what had been happening before it. Daisy—what had happened to her, lying maybe senseless in the storm, waking perhaps in terror, rising to run, struck—— He winced, and fell on his knees in the road.

O God, Who has spared Thine unworthy servant—no, he was no servant of God, he who browbeat women and flung them on the ground, a strong brute—but spare her,

O God, let her not be killed, O God. I love her, and maybe I've killed her.

He blundered to his feet and began in a jog trot to make for the moor once more, whipped on by keen agony. What had come over him to behave so. He had been mad, possessed by a devil, as the saying is. Poor girl, he saw it all. It was her very goodness he had struck at. When she was with him, she loved him so that she could refuse him nothing. When he had gone, she would remember the words of her dead mother; words to which, he now saw, in her ignorance of the world she could not give their true value, bless her poor little heart. And thus loyalty to that dead counsellor, and honest desire to break no jot of a code she had been too young to understand, had made her write those letters full of fear and anxious doubt. He pictured to himself, as he laboured on, what those last injunctions must have been: pictured the little girl by the bedside, with grey, wide-open eyes, trying to take them all in and remember them. "Yes, mother dear. No, mother dear." Poor little Daisy: he groaned to think of his own blindness. Never mind: he would make it all up to her, if—oh God—if she were not dead, drowned, struck, if he had not killed her. But if she lived—kind God, good God, let her be alive, don't punish her for my sin—why then, he planned innumerable tendernesses for her, making his way over the moor towards her home.

Daisy, once more hanging out her washing about an hour after the finish of the storm, looked up to see Dave stagger towards the gate. With quick solicitude she ran forward and caught him by the arm just as he was about to fall.

"Why, Davey dear," she cried, "you're all wet! Were you catched in the storm? Come in, my dear, and I'll get 'ee some dry clothes."

David raised a haggard face, looked at her, and fell on his knees.

"Thank God," he whispered, "you're safe, you're safe."

She blinked at him.

"I didn't hurt you? You weren't out in the storm?"

"Out in the storm? No—dear—no! What's more, I got the washing in in time, before the rain came."

"I didn't hurt you, that—that time I threw you down?"

"No, Davey dear." She became grave, as she helped him up the path. "Davey, I'm sorry I vexed you so. I must have vexed you dreadful, unmeaning. I won't do it no more."

She piloted him into the kitchen, and sat him down before the fire. "Sit there, till I get you some dry clothes. Then I'll go away while you changes."

"Daisy," he said meekly, as she went to the stairs, "Daisy, I was out in all the rain. I was nearly drownded . . . I saw a tree struck with the lightning close in front of me, Daisy."

She looked back at him over her shoulder.

"Yes," she said, "dreadful rain, wasn't it?"

Left alone, he felt weak, and stared dully into the fire. The storm had swept him clear of anger and indeed of all emotion; he had little thought but the need to make her understand his remorse. Why wouldn't she understand at once? He was too tired to explain. Well, she was safe, anyway, thank God. Yes, thank God for that. He wasn't a murderer, anyway.

He heard her cross the room above and saw her coming down the stair: first her feet and legs, then a bundle of clothes, and last of all her face, rosy from stooping, smiled at him.

"Here be the clothes, Davey dear. They be father's. He'll have took shelter down to Merrivale, I'll be bound. He's a good one to look after himself: better than my Davey."

He caught her arm, and spoke to her almost in despair.

"Daisy, hearken to me. I was out in the storm—you don't know what it was like: I was knocked down, Daisy, almost drownded, and a tree struck flat beside me."

"Poor darling, then. Hurry up now and change out of they wet clothes."

"—and . . . listen, Daisy . . . when I realised . . . I realised that God had spared me, an awful fear came over me that you were lying out in it all, dead, that perhaps I'd killed you, Daisy . . ."

It was no use. She was only half listening. Her eye

was roving round the room, towards the big oak dresser.

"Stupid!" she said, turning to him with a smile. "I was in long before the rain came. I came straight back and took in the washing. Now, hurry up, there's a dear, do, and when you're ready I'll give 'ee a glass of cordial, so as you won't take cold."

And with a last injunction to hurry, she was gone.

Well. . . . She wouldn't understand, ever. So far as she was concerned, his agony had been for nothing. Yet he had served her bad, there was no gainsaying that. He must treat her more loving, more understanding, in future. Perhaps no women had more imagination than that: perhaps they were all as ready to take anything, cruelty, violence even, from the man they loved. Perhaps——

It was clear to him, as he stood up and let the sodden clothes fall heavily from his body to the floor, that, though the storm had washed away a great load of bitterness and misunderstanding, the problem of Daisy was not yet solved.

THE ENEMY IN AMBUSH[1]

By HUGH WALPOLE

(From *The Cornhill Magazine*)

I

CAPTAIN JOHN FORD counted the minutes until his wife's arrival; not exactly because he loved her—they had been married now for fifteen years—but because her arrival meant his departure, meant the conclusion of the most trying six months of his life. He had known other trying times; that period at the beginning of his life with Mrs. Ford when he had loved her and she had not loved him; that time in India when one fever had trodden upon the heels of another with an impatient, exultant ferocity; that time in London when he had thought his best friend in love with his wife and had found to his horror that he didn't mind: all these times had been bad, but they had been nothing—no, nothing at all—to his winter in Moscow. He had come six months ago that he might acquire the Russian language for the benefit of his profession (that is the way that he saw it). He had been directed by the English Consulate to the family Ivanoff, the lady of the house being used to officers, the flat being in a pleasant part of the town (Krivarbatsky Pereoulok, D.11. k.s.) and the food "simple but excellent." He had arrived with a great many boxes at the beginning of September, and (of course, he did not realise this) Mme. Ivanoff's heart had sunk when she saw him. She had had English officers in her house now for fifteen years, but she had never seen any one so alarming as Captain John Ford. He was handsome, but stiff as a deal board. His clothes were surely made of iron, such creases were there in the trousers, so severe were the sleeves of his jacket: he was very tall and very

[1] Copyright, 1925, by Hugh Walpole.

thin with eyes like cold blue stones, a brown moustache that expressed in its every hair haughty and contemptuous surprise, and black shining boots that showed her, poor woman, that before many days were over Masha would incur his severest displeasure.

She would have liked to say that her rooms were all occupied, but she had just then no one at all and needed the money. She looked at his healthy, tanned, and self-satisfied countenance and her knees trembled. However, Mme. Ivanoff was a brave woman. She thought of Kostia, of Anna, of little Vladimir. . . . She said that she was delighted to see him.

II

Captain Ford's first impression was that "he couldn't have believed there could have been such a country." Certainly the weather during the first days towards the end of September was not propitious. It rained very often; the mud rose higher and higher in the streets; on many days a thick, heavy pall hung over the place, and every one walked with bent shoulders as though he dreaded a blow. The houses seemed to be made of *papier mâché,* the towers of gold and blue and green were cheap and tawdry, and the noise of the clanging trams was deafening; the Isvoschicks splashed mud over Captain Ford's trousers and officious people were always attempting to take his coat, hat, and stick away from him when he wished to retain them. No one walked on the right side of the street, church bells were always ringing when he wanted to slumber. At the Opera he was late and had to stand in the passage during a whole act, he tumbled continually over holes in the pavement, and was kept waiting in his bank two hours before they gave him his money.

"I simply couldn't have believed such a country possible," he said to himself again and again.

Then the Ivanoff family was like nothing that he'd ever known. Mme. Ivanoff herself, soft and fluffy and plump, with eyes that were always filling with tears, and the prettiest broken English, had been, in the opinion of many

English officers, "a dear little woman." They wrote to her long after they had left her, and told her that one day they would come back to live in Russia. She treasured their letters in a box that one of them had given her, with "A Present from Brighton" in red paint on the lid. But Captain Ford simply found her irritating. She was frightened with him, and when she gave him lessons in the morning lost her head, forgot her English, and sometimes even her Russian.

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand you," his moustache would say to her.

And she would stammer:

"Oh! How say it in Engleesh? What is that word—yes? You know—'appy, merry, gay—no, not gay. Ah—Tak!" And he would wait with a terrible patience, staring just over her head at the Ikon in the corner of the room.

Then she was certainly absent-minded and believed that good nature was of more value than sharpness of intellect. She simply wanted life to be pleasant for everyone, and was never happier than when six stout ladies of her acquaintance came early in the afternoon, and played Lotto with her until dinner time. Her husband also wished life to be pleasant. He was an inventor who had, many years ago, had considerable success with a patent clip that held papers for you with an iron clasp above your writing-table. Since then he had invented many things—boot-polish, a new way of peeling oranges, a game with horses and counters, a book-rest, and a collapsible chair that became an umbrella-stand when you had sat upon it long enough. Only the paper-clip had been really successful, but he lived in great hope, and was one of the most cheerful people in Moscow except at sudden moments of utter despair, when he loudly proclaimed his disdain of God, and told the cook (very much a friend of the family) that he intended to commit suicide before nightfall. He was a little man with a red moustache and large blue baby eyes—he was sentimental and absolutely credulous; he believed anything that anyone told him.

The children, Kostia, Anna, and Vladimir, were just like other children, loved their parents but only occa-

sionally obeyed them; made a tremendous noise, cried and laughed and sang. Kostia, however, was now a boy of fourteen and was beginning to regard life seriously, he read the newspaper, was often grave and silent, and patronised his father. But the most remarkable member of the family was Uncle Anton, Mr. Ivanoff's brother. Some people might have said that he was not quite right in his head, but all eccentricities were forgiven him for his "remarkable ideas."

"What kind of ideas?" said Captain Ford suspiciously when Mme. Ivanoff first told him this.

"Wonderful things," said Mme. Ivanoff, "about Russia, and God, and the Soul of Man."

"Really!" was all Captain Ford said.

Uncle Anton was remarkable to look upon; a giant of a man, with a long brown untidy beard, shaggy brown eyebrows, and a mop of utterly uncared-for hair. He was dirty and shabby, and sometimes not quite decent in his appearance. He ate his food in a horrible manner, blew his soup all over the table, and gnawed bones in his hands like a savage. What Captain Ford thought of these things may be imagined; no consolation to him that Uncle Anton loved humanity and would walk a mile rather than tread on a worm—no consolation at all. But the worst of it was that Uncle Anton took, from the first, a great liking to Captain Ford. "Here was a proper man," he said. "A man to whom I can talk," and talk to him he did. It was one of Mme. Ivanoff's hardest tasks to keep Uncle Anton out of Captain Ford's room. "He has other interests," she would tell her brother-in-law. "He is different from us."

"All men are the same," Uncle Anton replied, smiling down upon her. "We are all brothers. My heart is warm towards him."

Indeed, at first, the hearts of all the family were warm; they were prepared absolutely to make Captain Ford one of themselves. But Captain Ford did not like vodka; hated "schee," could not touch little cucumbers, and had a real terror of "Rabcheek." He watched with paralysed fascination little Vladimir's manner of mastication. Uncle Anton's

preoccupation with a chicken-bone paled the soldier's bronzed cheek.

Then he had never, at any time, been a great conversationalist. He had always distrusted talkers, and one of his favourite dicta was: "If you've got something you want to say, just think first as to whether it's really worth while, you're sure to find it isn't." The Ivanoffs certainly never thought first. They said exactly what came into their heads, talking all together, screaming and shouting if necessary, happy and friendly and merry. Madame Ivanoff soon discovered that Captain Ford disliked noise at meal times, and she did her best—but, unfortunately, her memory was short, she was easily excited, and her apologies afterwards seemed to give him very little pleasure. Other Englishmen had smiled at the noise and confusion. Captain Ford looked as though he were called on by his country to perform an especially hazardous and unpleasant duty. It was evident to anyone that he was not happy. There were many other little things. He wanted a cold bath every morning, and that should have been simple enough, but the taps were eccentric, the water was sometimes brown and thick, the catch would not fasten on the bathroom door (upon one occasion, when the Captain was in his bath, Uncle Anton entered, and, instead of retiring, proposed that they should have a bath together). Then there was the matter of "The Wash." In England this was a perfectly regular affair. You sent your washing on Monday and received it back again on Friday; but here, whatever you might do or say, "The Wash" had its own habits and customs. Frequently the arrival of "Prazniky" would delay things for a fortnight or so. Masha would be sent to the laundry with orders to die rather than return without the Captain's collars. Nevertheless she did return without them; she had had a wonderful conversation with the head of the laundry—he was an agreeable man, and hoped by next Tuesday or Wednesday to have discovered most of the Captain's things.

"You see what it is——" said Mme. Ivanoff, smiling happily.

"But, good God!——" cried the Captain.

He shut himself then into an impenetrable reserve, and the family regarded him with frightened eyes. He felt their terror and was irritated by it. He flung himself into the learning of Russian with a ferocity and pertinacity that was devastating. He was not very clever, but of an amazing doggedness. His accent was appalling, but he never made a mistake in grammar. It promised to be a dismal winter for the Ivanoffs.

III

Then, a few weeks before Christmas, Captain Ford discovered that something was the matter with him. The weather improved. The snow had fallen, and there came a succession of shining, crystal days, when the colours of the sky were reflected in shadowed lights on the white ground, when the towers of gold and green and blue hung, on misty evenings, like rounded clouds about the stars, when the eccentric shapes and pattern of the Moscow streets were romantic roads leading into mysterious countries, when every ugliness took on beauty, and every commonplace comer seemed to watch with a smile, half-hidden, half-pathetic, half-expectant. Captain Ford was uncomfortable. Entirely against his will he began to think of his young days, when he had loved a lady in the Gaiety chorus, had thought her a model of virtue and modesty, had even written poetry to her. There had even been a summer night when he had driven her out to Hampstead in a hansom and had appealed to the moon to witness his devotion. Ah! how he had laughed at himself since then, and what fools other young fellows with an equal romantic folly had seemed to him! There had been a moment, after his marriage with Mrs. Ford, when he had been threatened with some return of this same nonsense. It had been Mrs. Ford herself then who had laughed at him: "Why, John!" she had cried (they were at Monte Carlo on their honeymoon), "I had no idea you'd got that kind of rot in you!"

Afterwards, with a shadow of that same idealism, he had hoped for a son, but Mrs. Ford had thought it unwise of them to start a family when their income was still so slender, and they had decided to wait. They were waiting yet.

Now, in spite of himself, Moscow was making him uncomfortable. When, late, after some dinner-party, he was driving home in his Isvoschick, he would curse the cold and the bumping roads and the slowness of his horse, and, behind that cursing, there would be stealing a strange, warm, happy feeling of contentment, as the white streets ran in lines of light through the dark, uneven walls. The watchmen's fires leaping at the street corners, the thin flames burning before the Ikons, the Russian peace of that vast Russian night that covers so spacious and silent a land touching him with its cool hand, whispering to him with its friendly voice. By Christmas he had told himself that, if he did not take care, he would one day be making a fool of himself—he would be actually growing fond of the country. Now, this fear of making a fool of himself was a very real terror indeed, and was perhaps all the stronger in him now because he had shut himself up so tightly these last months. Christmas Eve was a hard day for him in this fashion: he bought presents for the Ivanoff children (fine presents, too), but would not come to the Christmas tree. They, however, emboldened by this happy excitement, came into his room and thanked him, and Vladimir (aged five) wished to kiss him. From this, fortunately, he was prevented. He was very stiff with them and seemed angry at their little speeches.

"Not at all. Not at all," he said. "Nitchevo. Nitchevo."

Then at supper the family gave him presents, Mme. Ivanoff a copy of Tutchev's poetry, Mr. Ivanoff a Russian tobacco box, and Uncle Anton a little brass Ikon. He was terribly embarrassed; he had nothing to say. "Thanks. Really—hum—Blagardargoo Vass—hum—Thanks." He wished with all his heart that he had arranged to dine that night with some English friends.

It happened then, in the early part of the year, that he saw performances at the Artistic Theatre of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Three Sisters*. He was moved unexpectedly, and, as he told himself, quite unreasonably. He had not been, at any time, a student of the theatre, but he was used in England to a comfortable play that began at nine o'clock punctually, had a story that a baby could

understand, with well-known performers in it, some of whom he knew at his Club and others who came to have tea with his wife. Moreover, it was one of his theories that a play must not be depressing. "Worries enough," he would say to his friends—"in ordinary life without your books and plays being worrying too. That's what *I* say" —and was apparently quite unaware that all his friends said the same thing. He had then no right to be anything but disgusted by *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Three Sisters*. Here were two plays depressing and inconclusive. Characters came in and out at their own pleasure, uttered remarks quite carelessly and without purpose, seemed to have no idea that they were in a play at all. At the end of the evening no one was settled for life—indeed, anyone who, at the beginning of the play, was settled, was seen to be unsettled by the end of it. Moreover, none of the actors looked like actors, nor had, apparently, any consciousness that the play would fall to pieces if they were not in it. It was all desperately unlike anything of which Captain Ford could be expected to approve, and yet he discovered in himself an increasing consciousness of disturbed alarm. It was exactly as though he were reconnoitring in some enemy's country, was aware that a man, in ambush, was waiting for him, and that every step might bring him leaping upon him. "One of these days I shall make a fool of myself if I'm not careful" . . . There was his enemy in ambush, an enemy serious enough in all conscience because, having made a fool of one's self once, it is only too possible that one may do so again, and then again, and at last be a fool altogether. In the love of Madame Ranevsky, of Gazef, of Firs, for their house and orchard, in the burning passion of Masha and Verstenen that glows like a dark fire at the very heart of *The Three Sisters,* he found the footsteps, the very secret marks of his enemy. Had he missed the whole purpose and meaning of life? Had he driven from him everything that life was intended to give to the soul of man? At that thought he shook himself as though he would wake from an evil dream. What had he to do with the Soul of Man? Was he not an English officer and a man of practical common

sense? He might as well be that drunken old idiot, Uncle Anton, at once. He was stiffer than ever with the Ivanoff family.

But the worst of it was that Uncle Anton, whom it was impossible to rebuff, whose child-like trust and simplicity saw what they wanted to see and not what they were told to see, insisted on treating him as though he alone in real truth knew Captain Ford as, in the depths of his heart, he was.

"You love this country," he said, standing over him and putting a big, dirty hand on his shoulder. "You love this country. It is stealing every day more deeply into your heart. I know that this is so, and that after you have left us you will long always to return. You will have a great hunger . . ." a ridiculous way for one man to talk to another.

It happened then that as the weeks of the new year increased Captain John Ford longed every day more passionately to escape. He hurled himself at his Russian, and made remarkable progress. The Ivanoffs, with the exception of Uncle Anton, were now really afraid of him, and felt his stiff unfriendliness like a cloud about the house. It could not be said that they awaited his departure with sorrow, nevertheless, in their way, they were proud of him. "You never saw such an Englishman," they would tell their friends, "so proud and stiff. He never opens his lips. The children are so quiet you wouldn't know them—a fine man, a proper Englishman."

Then Mrs. Ford wrote to say that, in the course of her travels, she had reached Sebastopol, would travel home through Russia, and would pick him up on her way. "I'm sure you'll be glad to get home again," she said, "after all the queer people you've been seeing. . . ."

Why was it that, in reading her letter, he had the strangest feeling that his wife wasn't real? Oh yes! he had certainly been out of England long enough. He awaited with impatience, and also with a strange anxiety, his wife's arrival.

IV

Mrs. Ford arrived: she was a brisk little woman, who stood on her toes and pecked at the world like a bright, hard little bird. Very smart in her dress, the impression she gave was that she despised, above everything else, waste of time. She even clipped her sentences:

"Well, John, here I am. Leave to-morrow 10.30. Must. Promised the Andersons be back in time for the Anderson girl's wedding. Poor dear—how odd you look—want some new clothes."

Her evening meal with the Ivanoffs was a strange business. She talked brightly and sharply, looking just over Mme. Ivanoff's shoulder. Mme. Ivanoff hated her at the very first glance, which was odd, because Mme. Ivanoff never hated people. The whole family hated Mrs. Ford, and she remained for many years after in the minds of the Ivanoff children as a picture of dreadful, devastating tyranny. Uncle Anton also disliked her so much that he would not speak at all during the meal, and was heard to mutter to himself later in the evening: "My poor dear friend! My poor dear friend."

And this was the strangest part of it that, in the light of the newly revealed Mrs. Ford, the Captain, who had been throughout the winter a terror and a depression, was suddenly a victim. The Ivanoff family discovered that it had really loved him all the time, and to allow him to be carried away in the charge of such a woman was a piercing tragedy! He was going away to-morrow! Why, they would miss him! They were not sure that they were not prouder of him than of any Englishman that they had ever had. Upon that evening there was developed a sudden intimacy, and Mme. Ivanoff could not help looking at him with mysterious glances, and Ivanoff himself was grievously tempted to press his hand.

Meanwhile John Ford was in a strange condition. That impression that he had had on reading his wife's letter of her unreality oddly persisted. When she spoke to him he felt as though he were looking at something through a looking-glass—take the glass away and the reflection went with it. She was like a memory that he didn't wish to

remember or a photograph of a college cricketing team. Moreover, he knew, quite desperately, that he didn't wish to go to-morrow. That strange dread that had been creeping daily more close to him was now very near indeed.

"I *shall* make an awful ass of myself if I'm not careful," he said to himself, looking at his wife.

Before they parted for the night he looked at Uncle Anton, and, with a shock of surprise, thought, "I believe he *is* the only man who's ever really known me!" He lay sleepless all night beside the unreal body of his wife; his foot touched hers, and it was as though someone had asked him to repeat the Latin verses that he used to learn when he was a boy at school. When the early dawn lit her face he felt a sudden impulse to get up and run for miles and miles into the very heart of Russia and there be lost.

He did not run—his training had been too thorough for that—but the parting in the morning was strangely moving. Mrs. Ford said good-bye briskly and with a bright air of relief because she would never see these appalling people again.

"Come, John, we shall miss our train."

The Captain stood, looking very English.

"I'm coming," he said.

He seemed to be waiting for her to start down the stairs as though he had got something very special and private to say, but when she had gone all he said was:

"Well, well, good-bye, Mrs. Ivanoff—very kind—yes. Well, well——"

He tipped the children; Uncle Anton made a rush at him, stopped half-way, rushed back, and closed the door of his room. Captain Ford, with eyes that were for the first time in the experience of the Ivanoffs soft and human, made a dash for the stairs as though he were pursued.

"Good-bye . . . Good-bye . . . Good-bye," they cried.

They had hired a motor car, and Mrs. Ford was already sitting in it.

"Well, what people!" she said. "We've just nice time for the train."

The car had started when suddenly the Captain leaned

out of the window and stopped it. "I've forgotten something," he said to his wife.

He jumped out of the car, dashed down the street, and was through the door of the building. He rang the bell of the Ivanoff flat. Masha opened it; he pushed past her, and, without knocking on the door, broke into Uncle Anton's room. Uncle Anton was standing, a huge figure, before his window, peering down into the street.

He turned round.

"It's only," Ford, who was breathless, stammered, "that I hadn't—said good-bye."

He held out both his hands. Uncle Anton took them, then kissed him gravely three times. Captain Ford, who had never before in his life been kissed by a man, said, still breathlessly:

"I'm coming back. . . . I wanted you to know. . . . I'm coming back."

"Of course," Uncle Anton said.

He hurried away and was in the car again.

"But, John," his wife said. "Whatever! . . . The train. . . ."

He said nothing. He stared out of the window. The first warmth of spring was in the air. The streets were running with streams of water, blue from the reflection of the sky. The Ikon above the gate in the Lubiansky Ploshet shone and glittered; the air seemed to be full of a noise of bells and hammers. The row of booths with their dolls and fruit, their hideous china ornaments and their wooden toys were reflected with all their colours in the pools of water. John Ford drew a deep sigh, then nodded to himself.

He knew that his enemy had made his spring, and he was glad.

WHILE 'ZEKIEL PLOUGHED[1]

By C. HENRY WARREN

(From *The Outlook*, London)

'ZEKIEL had reached the end of a furrow. "Woa-cam," he said; "woa-hup!" The two mares came to a halt. Their flanks were steaming. 'Zekiel looped the reins over the plough handle. He walked up to a bundle that lay on the hedge grass and extracted a can of cold tea. He did everything with leisure—as a ploughman will. Ever since he could remember, he had followed the plough. And now he was seventy.

'Zekiel didn't know that he was being watched. But then he never saw anything that didn't immediately concern him. A Stranger was looking at him over the hedge, his face framed in the last red sprays of the briars.

"Good afternoon," the Stranger said. His voice thrummed across the empty silence. 'Zekiel jumped. All through the golden afternoon his thoughts had moved endlessly round the one same task; and it took time for him to project himself into this new attitude. Then, "Good afternoon," he said.

One corner of the Stranger's mouth curved up, as if he were constantly about to break into a laugh. "You've nearly come to the end of your last acre, I see," he said. "Whose fields are these?"

'Zekiel stared at the hedge. "Yem," he said, replying to the first question first; and then, "Farmer Spriggs'." There was silence: nothing more, as 'Zekiel thought, seemed called for. "A silent old fellow," said the Stranger to himself.

One of the mares was restive. "Woa, Lady," said 'Zekiel.

[1] Copyright, 1925, by C. Henry Warren.

"So you call the grey mare, Lady, do you?" the Stranger asked.

Again 'Zekiel saw no need for any comment. "Yem," was all he said.

"Damn the man," the Stranger thought. "Is he never going to say anything of his own accord?" 'Zekiel was standing on the edge of the furrow. The earth was sweating in the sun. The Stranger made one last effort. "And what would Mr. Spriggs say, I wonder, if he knew I was keeping you here like this, wasting his time?"

'Zekiel's blue eyes brightened. He had caught the whole drift of that remark, anyway. He knew very well what Farmer Spriggs would say. His smile broadened. He opened his mouth. He laughed softly. "Yem," he said.

"What a fool!" thought the Stranger. "A bachelor, I should imagine. Lives all alone. Never speaks to a soul." Then a playful idea occurred to him. His mouth twitched. He would have a joke with the old man.

"What would you do," he asked, very seriously, leaning his face out over the hedge, "if when you got home tonight, you found your cottage gone, clean gone? Not a trace of it to be seen anywhere? Nothing but the grass where it used to stand?" He paused a moment. "Eh, what'd you do?"

He didn't wait for any answer. Stepping down from the bank, he gave 'Zekiel good-day, and passed up the road.

'Zekiel stared after him. "A rummy chap, that," he thought. Then he spoke softly to himself. "Whatever do he mean, I wonder, about finding my old cottage gone? What do he mean?"

The Stranger, it happened, was quite right. 'Zekiel was a bachelor. He did live alone in a cottage. And since his cottage stood on the edge of the Common, a mile beyond Little Ledham, he hardly ever did see anyone there to speak to. Ever since his old mother died, he had lived alone there; and that was twenty years ago. Twenty years of loneliness. No wonder 'Zekiel hadn't much to say when strangers came popping their heads over the hedge like that, making him jump, and asking silly questions.

Ledham itself was a quiet place. In fact, they had a

queer saying over at Stringer's End, the next village. They said the Lord had made their village last of all the places on the earth, and that He had shovelled the dirt over on to Ledham. 'Zekiel's cottage was in a lonelier place still.

But 'Zekiel didn't mind loneliness. He loved his little thatched cottage—if he could be said to love anything. He was so old. His one fear was the rheumatism. Farmer Spriggs wouldn't want him as ploughman then. There would be nothing left for him but the Workhouse.

But lonely? It was whispered down in the village that poor old 'Zekiel was a little daft, you know; only they said it kindly, because they thought him such a harmless, gentle soul; and such a lonely forsaken life he lived. But they didn't know.

There were two rooms in 'Zekiel's cottage, and a lean-to. The thatch was green with moss and grass; and the sparrows bickered all day under the eaves. There was no garden in the front, nor much behind; but it was room enough for 'Zekiel's potatoes; and his few fowls had all the Common to roam.

'Zekiel used to talk to his clock and his lamp and his bits of crockery, as any other man would talk to his dog. All the place was familiar to him, and very friendly. Twenty years of mute companionship had made even the meanest things sentient for him and kindly. . . .

So when the Stranger was gone, old 'Zekiel went about his ploughing, greatly troubled in his weak, warped mind. What was that he had said? "What would you do if you found your cottage clean gone, and nothing but the grass where it stood?" He turned the thought over and over, never letting it rest. Darkly, and for the first time in his life, he knew that he liked his little crooked home. His eyes were clouded and serious.

Putting his hand to the plough again, he worked on mechanically, letting the horses have their will. He climbed the hill and passed out of sight. When he was gone there was no noise at all but a robin chirping out his tiny brass notes from the hedge. 'Zekiel came over the crest again. He looked as though every thought was bent on cutting a clean, straight furrow; but a cruel maggot was eating at

his brain. He was muttering to himself, "I wonder what he do mean? . . . my cottage gone . . . only the grass?"

The afternoon wore on. The low rays of the sun burned the elms to tawny flames. Now and then a shower of yellow leaves fell, without any wind, as their time came.

Strange little memories thrust themselves up into 'Zekiel's consciousness: of the way he would sit by the hearth when the wind blew round his cottage; or of the kettle singing ready for his morning tea; or of the friendly look it all had when, candle in hand, he turned the key in the door and made ready for bed. "Gone . . . clean gone!" the foolish words went ringing on. He turned the last furrow and unharnessed the mares from the plough. He had not heard the clock strike four, some time ago.

It was already past sunset when 'Zekiel shut the gate of the farm-yard behind him and turned down the lane. He had to pass through the village and across the Common. He walked with his head bent down. He saw nothing. Now and then he would pass someone; but he didn't hear their greeting. "Poor old 'Zekiel," they thought, "up in the clouds, as usual." He meant to have bought some bread in Ledham, but he forgot it. The words in his brain kept time with the slow clop-clop of his tread. "Gone . . . clean gone!"

The last house of Ledham was behind him now. Not that he noticed where he was. He knew every inch of the way and could, he would have sworn, have walked it blindfolded. Indeed, he was as good as blindfolded now, so occupied was he. His mazy mind was as grey and eerie as the dusk that spread rapidly round him.

He set foot on the Common. Little threads of paths wound in all directions, in and out of the gorse and the bushes, leading this way and that. He knew them all by heart. For nearly seventy years he had trod them. Without intending to do so, he was hurrying more and more now, as he came near the cottage. His heart beat quickly, stabbing him with little angry pains; but he didn't notice them. Another quarter of a mile and he would be home. He plodded on. ". . . nothing but the grass," his thoughts were singing.

Instinctively he knew that he must be within sight of the cottage. His eyes cleared a little. He looked up.

There was nothing there to see, in the thickening twilight, but the grey stretch of the grassy Common. Then it was true? His cottage *was* gone. Clean gone!

He shut his eyes and then, half-believing that he had been wrong, opened them again. No, there was nothing there. Nevertheless, he walked across the bare place, as if to make sure. Nothing was there, but grass and a bush of gorse. . . . So this was what the Stranger had meant? 'Zekiel stood still, holding his hand against his thumping heart. Did he think that if he were only to wait long enough, the little house would return again, with all its familiar kindly sense of home? The clock, the jug, the broken stool, and the fireplace? Nothing returned.

Then suddenly he ran, stumbling over the Common, in the direction of Little Ledham. "Gone . . . clean gone," he shouted wheezily.

They led him into Sarah Gee's cottage, near the 'Smithy. He dropped into the first empty chair. He could only breathe with difficulty. They could make no sense at all, at first, of the few words he mumbled. They thought he was gone quite mad this time. And then Sarah, fancying he said something about his cottage being gone, supposed there had been a fire, and sent her boy Tommy to the Common to see.

'Zekiel was silent. His face creased up with every breath he took; and then all his muscles seemed to grow stiff. They lifted him over to the couch. He lay quite still. Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

Presently Tommy came running in. "The place beän't burnt at all, mother," he said. It was obvious that he was disappointed there had been no fire. He appealed to another boy standing in the doorway. "We did see it there with our own eyes, didn't we, John?" Then he noticed 'Zekiel lying stiff on the couch. "And what be the matter with the owd man?" he asked.

THE DIAMOND[1]

By E. L. GRANT WATSON

(From *The Cornhill Magazine*)

THE *Mary Rogers* was the first boat out of St. Michaels to go south after the long period of the northern winter. The port was free at last from the ice, and the small steamer beat her way southward. Mrs. Cochran was the only woman on board that trip. Sometimes an Eskimo would go south with his wife as far as Sitka, but European women were not often to be found travelling in those far northern latitudes. She was a young woman of not more than thirty, accustomed to travel alone or to go long journeys at the behest of her husband, as on this occasion. She now stood upon the upper deck, her fur coat wrapped close about her, and her dark eyes looking out keenly from under her heavy fur cap.

To the south and west there was the grey expanse of the sea, with cold, grey waves monotonously following one another. To the north there was a track of white foam left behind them, and to the eastward the long brown edge of the Malaspina glacier. Both the cold sea and that long ridge of rotten ice presented a drear and melancholy aspect, but on the lower deck under her feet there was life and interest, the constant movement of men and animals. Some twenty or thirty rough-haired ponies were tethered on the starboard side. They were constantly moving, tossing their heads or whinnying, looking out with frightened eyes across the sea. The strong odour of their bodies, which seemed to fill all the adjacent air, had mingled since the start of the voyage with the other rank effluvia of a northern coaster, and had transmitted to the food its pervading flavour. Beyond the ponies and further forward

[1] Copyright, 1925, by E. L. Grant Watson.

were two dog teams; these kept up a continuous bickering amongst themselves, snarling and growling. A young Eskimo flicked them from time to time with the long lash of his whip. From the galley was wafted the strong savour of food together with the rank stench of burnt blubber.

Mrs. Cochran was well pleased with her surroundings. An English woman of taste and refinement, she had a passion for travelling. She liked now to look down upon the foreign and peculiar quality of this boat. There were Eskimos, Indians and Americans, rough men whom she admired for the hardihood and endurance of their lives. She had not traversed the Yukon and spent a long, dark winter in Dawson City without appreciating the valour of human courage which, in that remote land, lives side by side with every degradation of the human brute. She was interested in her fellow human beings. To her imaginative perception the discovery of each new type was an enlargement of her own personality, an enlargement of perception and emotion.

She had been watching for some time a tall, gaunt man, the only other passenger, on that bleak morning, upon the upper deck, and who, for the last hour, and for longer for all she knew, had been leaning over the rail at some twenty paces distant and gazing over the sea. This man had, from the first, attracted her attention. His silence, his cold, remote dignity, his drawn, thin face, his grey eyes, which were so pale in colour, and then the pervading quality of the man which though almost unhuman and withdrawn was in no way hard, but soft rather, with a softness not of yielding nor submission, but with that mildness which is the accomplished acceptance of fate; all these appealed to her as the attributes of some rare and profound experience.

She had watched him. In the saloon, at meal times, she had seen his embarrassment with handling of knife and fork; it was obvious that he was unaccustomed to the using of these implements. On the one or two occasions that she had addressed him, he had answered in the voice of an educated man. He had been reticent, and she had

been left wondering if possibly there could be any vestige of truth in the gossip which, with a careless laugh, had been thrown from mouth to mouth, that in the far North, in the darkness of winter, he had killed and eaten three of his companions. She did not credit that loose talk, yet she was intrigued. How was it that the man could remain so patiently, hour after hour, leaning against the rail and gazing with that steady and intent stare over the sea?

She walked over to where he was standing.

'Mr. Hales.'

He turned slowly, and withdrawing, as if regretfully, his glance from the distance, regarded her with those grey eyes whose look was indefinably cold and tender. She was surprised to see now that he was younger than she had thought. He was certainly not more than forty, and perhaps only thirty-five. This was the face of a young man, but because of its thinness and the deepness of its lines it was different from the faces of other men that she had met. She was not daunted by his silence nor the directness of his look. She had come prepared for words, and words she would have now at any cost. The man must after all be human and would answer to her own humanity. 'Since we are the only two on deck,' she said, 'it seems natural that we should speak to one another.'

'It's very kind of you,' he said slowly, and then, with the simple naivety of a child, he added: 'I have been wanting to speak, but I am shy. You are the first woman that I have seen for nearly five years. I have seen very few men, even, during that time.'

'Indeed, have you been so far away in the wilds?'

His gaze had strayed beyond her and was again fixed upon the sea. He frowned slightly. 'I've noticed you, and I've seen that you have been watching me. . . . I find it difficult to speak to anyone, I have got unaccustomed to words.' He looked at her now for a moment. 'You've watched me in the saloon, and have seen that I'm not very clever with my knife and fork; and I have watched your hands.'

'My hands?'

'Yes, the rings. You have some diamonds.'

She looked at him surprised, hesitated, and then took off her glove. 'This thing, you mean?'

His face suddenly became alive with light and pleasure. 'They are so beautiful, there is nothing surely more beautiful in the world than a diamond.'

Mrs. Cochran was regarding him with a questioning wonder. He was like a child, pleased at the sight of some toy; and that quality of childishness did not fail to find a response. She took off her ring and handed it to him.

He held it up to the light. 'So pure, so pure,' he said. 'Oh, marvellous!' He smiled at her and gave a sudden short laugh. He handed the ring back. 'You must put on your glove now, or your hand will get cold,' he said, 'but let me see it again some other time.'

'Yes, I will, certainly, if you like.' She laughed, and feeling that she could speak to the naivety of the child more readily than she could have spoken to the restraint and reticence of the man, she said: 'Tell me about yourself. Where have you been? What have you been doing?'

'I've been on the ice.' The sentence stood simple yet ambiguous.

'On the ice?' she repeated.

'Yes.' His smile flickered over the deep lines about his mouth, and he turned more fully towards her. 'I'd like to tell you. I'd like to tell you about it all from the start, if you could bear to hear, if it would not weary you.'

'Do tell me. I want to hear.' And then, smiling, she asked, 'Is it anything about diamonds?'

He looked away, and disregarding this last question, said simply, 'It's good of you. I have wanted to tell somebody. It will help me to get back . . . to people, help me to take hold again. You don't know how wonderful it is,' he added seriously, 'for me to be standing here talking to a woman, to the sort of woman I used to meet and talk to; it's just too wonderful for me to realise altogether.'

She still regarded him wonderingly and amused. For a moment she encountered those pale, cold eyes, and now she saw that there was fire and life, an enduring spark of vitality behind the coldness of their grey. This man was attractive by his very remoteness and by that flash of ani-

mation which she had perceived. His eyes, in their profound and still attention, were similar to the grey spirit of that northern land, which at first had seemed to her of a neutral quality, but which strangely had revealed, in darkness and in the splendour of northern lights, its polar vitality. As they dwelt for a moment upon her, and then went by again to rest upon the distant horizon, she registered her perception of that quality. They revealed, not so much the soul of a man, but the crystalline reality of the Arctic, and the fire within the crystal. Those eyes had rested upon the diamond in her ring. It now seemed natural that he should have noticed that stone. They had become, for a moment, when she had handed it to him, wistful with the wistfulness of a child; again they rested upon the waves, cold and remote.

The story that he told was spoken in a low and even voice. Sometimes he paused in the narration as if exploring again the back-thoughts of the past. Silences would intervene, which she did not break; like her companion she let her glance rest upon the grey, ever-moving waves.

'Five years ago this spring I was with a small party of prospectors. I was a mining engineer by profession, and in the employ of a company that owns much property in Alaska. I was in charge of that party, and we were exploring territory north and east of the Behring Strait. We expected to be back on the Yukon by the winter. Of necessity we often had to make long expeditions from our base. On these expeditions we were dependent for fresh meat on the food that we shot or speared. Often we would go down to the sea ice and spear seals at their breathing-holes. . . .

'There were eight of us at that time, I remember, and we had scattered over a large area. It was springtime, as I have said, but unexpectedly early for the ice to begin breaking up. Without any warning a huge piece of ice, sheared and cut away by some unsuspected current, broke from the main sheet. Six of us were upon that piece of floating ice. The two other men of our party were upon the shore. I don't know if they ever got back to their base. I never heard. I was one of the six men upon the

floating ice. The thing happened quickly. There was the characteristic splitting and wrenching sound, then, almost before we realised what had happened, we were drifting out to sea. The current was setting strong from the coast, and when we reached the fractured edge, the stretch of water was too wide to venture an attempt at swimming back to the land ice.

'We didn't guess then what was in store for us. No doubt each one of us was a little afraid; we had heard stories of the same thing happening before, and we knew the dangers, but we didn't for a long time realise what that accident implied. No, I don't think any one of us guessed at the slow cruelties of chance. We assured each other—I remember how warmly we assured each other—that the current which was now carrying us away would be sure to meet some other current which would, in a little while, drift us back to the shore. . . .

'There was a ridge of pack-ice which ran across our floating island. We huddled together under that for shelter for the night. We excavated a cave in it later, but that first evening we didn't bother to do anything so elaborate, we didn't then see the need. The next morning we were out of sight of land. There was nothing but sea and floating ice around us. It was a huge piece we were on, and so long as the weather kept good there was no immediate danger. . . . I think every one of us was frightened at the look of that desolate sea, though we didn't speak our fears; we assured one another that the ice we were on was large and thick and safe. . . . We took stock of our resources: We had good warm clothes, we had two guns and about a hundred cartridges, three harpoons and six knives and a box or two of matches, and what proved to be most important, we had between us about a dozen fish-hooks and some line. . . .

'We drifted sometimes one way, sometimes another, day after day; sometimes we could see land in the distance, and sometimes we were alone upon a sea of floating ice. We had no means of taking bearings and only the vaguest idea where we were, for it was difficult to estimate the force or the direction of the currents. It was summer and there were plenty of seals and we were not hard up for food. We

kept our cartridges in reserve and used only our harpoons. Our fish-hooks were very useful, and we learned to make others from the bones of the fishes that we caught, and to make line from the twisted gut. We excavated a hole in the central ridge of our island, and in this we lived. We made a lamp from a wick of cloth floating in a skin bag of seal-oil. It was the duty of one of us to see that this was always burning. We wanted to save our matches, and already feared the winter and the long winter darkness.

'That first summer was our initiation; we began to discover what life in the Arctic was like. We thought we knew, but we didn't know till then. . . .' He broke off and was silent for a while. 'You have lived through a northern winter?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Then you'll know that during that long darkness a man feeds, as it were, upon his own inner warmth, his own power. It is as if something from deep in human nature has been dragged up to the surface. Men are a little afraid of themselves. The first light of the sun has an amazing effect. All one's being seems to rush to one's throat and head. It is exciting; no one can resist it. The days lengthen, the nights vanish, and the midnight sun looks faintly down. The continuous light produces at first a wakeful restlessness. We were terribly restless on our island of ice. Later we learned to shift our consciousness further back, to hide ourselves from those cold rays. We came to hate that continuous light, and when the nights came again we were glad. We learnt during that first summer to hide ourselves from ourselves, and from one another.

'We drifted first southward, then out to sea, then northwards again as far as we could tell. We were anxious for a time about our island, which had grown considerably less, but what we felt and resented most of all was our utter impotence. We were at the mercy of chance, and we were made to feel that nature had no regard for our hope or our despair.'

Hales paused for a long while; at length, as though his thoughts after a long journey had returned again to the place where last they had found utterance in words, he con-

tinued in the same even and unimpassioned voice. 'It was our minds, during that first summer, and not our bodies that suffered. Then came the winter, and with it hope and fear. We were frozen in again, and our island was become a part of the sheet of ice which seemed to stretch endlessly, endlessly around us. During the summer we had made preparations; we had seal-skin overalls, and carried with us long strips of dried meat. We left our grotto in the ice, and abandoned the lamp which we had kept burning for so long.

'At that time we were filled with hope and courage. Anything was better than drifting at the mercy of wind and current. We knew roughly where the land must be, and could tell our compass from the stars. We travelled as fast as we could, living on the meat that we had with us, and on the fifth day we came to land. It was a desolate coast of rocks, but still land, firm and immovable. . . . The winter came quickly with a series of fierce northerly blizzards. We could not travel in that wild weather, so we made a snow hut Eskimo-fashion, and in this we lived for seven long, weary months. We used a lot of cartridges that first winter; we killed twenty-seven polar bears and ate the greater part of them, and a large number of seals and foxes. It was amazing the amount of meat that we ate, and yet we were always hungry.

'I can give you no idea of the slow passage of time, but a man changes as time passes, and when the conditions are so different from anything that he has before experienced, then he becomes different too. This calamity had come so suddenly upon us that our morale was shaken. We were unprepared, and so went down before the stress of fortune. We were like sad animals, living an inner instinctive life; we relapsed back into the past, and yet we were aware, some of us at least were aware, of what we were forgetting. . . .

'I can't tell it you. I can't tell it you all, it would take too long; but the next summer we wasted. We had to follow the coast-line, for there only could we find food. It took us all that summer to find out that we were on an island. It was laborious work, and we covered many hundred miles in our wanderings. We camped again and spent another

winter. We were very near despair; all were hungry, badly hungry, for the first time, for we kept our cartridges in reserve to use only if we were attacked by bears. That winter Jefferson, one of the younger of our party, died. We buried him in the snow and wondered who would be the next to follow.

'The next spring we got off that island, and made the mainland at last. It was a slow and laborious task following the coast-line with all its inlets and headlands. We had changed so much by then, had become so much like animals living in the snow and ice, that I don't think we hoped for anything very definite: we went on from habit, like automata. We rarely ever spoke to each other. . . . I dare say if the conditions had been less hard things would have been different, but as it was each one seemed withdrawn far away into himself. We existed, and to exist we ate; we never cooked our food now, all our matches had got wet and hopelessly spoilt; we ate our food raw, and I think that the taste of the warm blood was the only pleasure we had. The third winter was our worst. Johnson, who all that summer had been very fierce and sulky, went raving mad. We had a dreadful time with him, but I think it woke us out of our apathy. He finally ran out into the darkness and we never saw him again.

'It was Johnson's madness, more than anything else, that frightened me and woke me up from the coma into which I had fallen. I remembered that I had once been a man. I remember looking out over that drear landscape and feeling that in spite of everything I would come through. I began to hope again. . . . It was then that I began to make things.'

'To make things?' Mrs. Cochrane questioned. 'What kind of things?'

'Things that my materials suggested. I'll show them to you some time. I made them out of the skins of birds and animals that I killed. I sewed them with a needle made of fish-bone and used dried fish-gut for thread. I found a satisfaction in doing the work as neatly as I could. It did me good and the things I made reminded me of the civilisation that one time I had known. I began to think

again. . . . It may seem strange, but it was about that time that I began to think about precious stones, and in particular about diamonds. The precious stone is the finest and most beautiful thing that the culture of any time has been able to produce; it's so much a thing in itself, you can't go behind it. . . . In that long darkness of the winter I used to think about precious stones, and then it was one big diamond that I used to think about. A diamond had all those qualities which ice might have, but which it never possesses; ice is always murky or flecked, it perishes and it breaks. A diamond is always clear and hard. To think of it used to give me pleasure and a kind of consolation. I made up my mind that, if ever I got back, I would buy the biggest diamond that my money could buy.'

The low, monotonous refrain in which he was speaking ceased, and as if reclaiming himself from a world of dream and fancy, he looked with a sudden shy glance at his companion. 'Perhaps this sounds to you just a little bit mad?' he asked.

'No, not madder than many other of the desires of men and women. The wonder is that you didn't go mad altogether.'

'It was that that saved me,' he said with conviction.

'Yes, I can understand.' And looking into his cold grey eyes, she could understand how that the abstract idea of a stone, hard and flawless, holding within the depths of its transparencies a light, so secret and elusive as to be akin to life itself, might offer, even in its image, a symbol to save a human soul from the abyss. 'And now that you are safe and back again, are you going to buy one?' she asked.

'Yes, that's what I want more than anything else.' As he spoke his eyes showed that bright and sudden glitter which she had before noticed. 'The company that I have worked for have treated me very well. As soon as they heard that I had turned up again, they cabled, together with their congratulations, my salary for the last five years. I have more than two thousand pounds. Do you think I could buy a good large diamond for two thousand pounds?'

'Would you spend it all?'

'Yes.'

'I should think you could get a good one for that price. But when you've got it, what will you do with it?'

'I shall look at it,' he said. 'I shall like to look at it. It will be the thing I have wanted, the thing that life has made me want. It's the light that came to me in that darkness; it gave me the impulse and the power to hope. Do you understand?'

She looked at him for some moments in silence, then she smiled. 'Tell me how you got through,' she said, 'and what happened to the other men.'

The intensity which had come into his manner and speech vanished abruptly. 'We all got through all right. We pulled ourselves together after Johnson went mad. Last autumn, before the bad weather came, we struck a trading station, and early this spring came overland to Nome. From there I came straight on to St. Michaels and was lucky in catching this boat.'

'And now?' she queried.

'I'm going back to look at civilisation. I shall buy the very best and purest thing it can give.'

'A diamond!'

'The finest I can get. It will make up, if you can understand, for those years; they have not been altogther wasted.'

'Don't you want anything else?' she asked. 'You are a young man; you will grow young again.'

'Other things may come, but I want that first.'

Mrs. Cochran laughed; she turned her eyes from the grey waves to the lower deck where men and animals jostled together in restless movement. 'After all,' she said, 'you can always give it to your wife.'

He shook his head and remained silent. His glance, which had strayed for a moment over the activities of the ship, rested again on the horizon.

Mrs. Cochran had been about to speak, but paused. Her philosophy of common sense, which had guided her through many of life's difficulties, was a little shaken. She wondered if indeed a stone, however pure and beautiful, however large and precious, could make up for the lost years, the lost desires and impulses. Perhaps he was right, and a diamond might be as good a recompense as life could offer.

"CHANSON TRISTE"[1]

By A. W. WELLS

(From *The English Review*)

I HAVE sometimes thought that if I put it all down on paper, precisely and exactly as it occurred, my mind might become easier. Certainly nothing has given me relief up to now. One, two, three, seven years ago it must be since it happened, and at a spot four or five thousand miles away, to which I am never likely to return; and yet there still come days, nights, sometimes even weeks, when the whole thing will break out in my brain again as though everything took place only yesterday. Curious—the odd, queerly inconsequent sort of causes to which I trace these outbreaks. Always, for instance, I seem to find myself worst when the grapes are in season (especially the small "black" variety), or when the plovers are crying on bright moonlight nights; while there is one place which I have learned to shun as I might shun a plague. If I can possibly avoid it, nothing will ever induce me to climb the hill that stretches along the Surrey suburb in which I live, and look across the twenty miles wide valley to where the next range of hills looms across the horizon.

But perhaps the most weird result of all is that I can never stay in a room for long where Tschaikovsky is being played—particularly his "Chanson Triste." I like Tschaikovsky; yet when the orchestra played "Chanson Triste" to-night I simply had to come out. I couldn't stand it any longer. Joan, I could see, was as nearly furious with me as she has ever been since our marriage. She's forgiven me now, for I have told her all about it, shown her the photograph and kept not a single detail back from her . . . but I could see quite plainly that she did not understand. And I want somebody to understand. Most of

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all, of course, I want Dimitri to understand. I'd give ten, twenty, years of my life, I believe, it I could only make Dimitri understand.

No, Dimitri was not a woman: a soldier, just a common Bulgar soldier, but with this one supreme and startling difference—that of the men who died in the Great War Dimitri died the worst death of all. And although it was no weapon of mine—either held, directed, or commanded by me—that killed him, I am afraid I was responsible for that death. Of one thing, at least, I am certain: Dimitri thinks I was responsible. The whole tragedy lies in that.

It would be the most foolish, in some ways the most tragic, mistake in the world to suppose that this is just an ordinary war story that I have to relate. I wish it were. If I could only trace one experience similar to mine (as, indeed, I have spent hours and hours browsing over bookstalls trying to find it) I should feel comforted; but nowhere have I been able to discover the vaguest hint of a resemblance. It all happened not far from a town called Dorrain, which is situated at the far end of the valley where the river Struma runs between Bulgaria and Macedonia; but I would rather you immediately forgot those names, and pictured to yourself only the town and the valley—the town a poor, war-battered heap of buildings, and the valley a twenty miles' stretch of country, lying between ranges of hills so high and formidable that the military experts had long since given them up as impregnable. And I would have you imagine that while in the town war is being carried on in the best modern manner—two opposing swarms of rats gradually nibbling into one another's territory—all the warfare that exists in the valley is conducted by small groups of men who creep down from their respective hills in the night-time, wander vaguely about the valley until dawn comes, and then creep weariedly back again. All night long the shriek of the shrapnel and the glare of the Verey lights may be hovering over the town; but in the twenty miles wide valley the darkness may pass without the sound or the flash of a single rifle shot. And the valley is so strewn with ravines and little clumps of trees, and men

are so very scarce there, that a group of men from one range of hills may pass a group of men from the other, barely a hundred yards away, and never be aware of it.

So I think you may very fairly visualise the scene in which the experience I have to relate to you occurred; and yet I find myself altogether at a loss to convey the feeling of a man suddenly withdrawn from his little rat-hole in the town, and sent roaming about the valley wherever the fancy moved him—the groping, childlike fright of it all, those first few nights, and then, as time wore on, the sweet, civilian scent of liberty that suddenly seemed to breathe over everything. I wish I could convey to you, for instance, only a fraction of the divine joy there was to be had in those secret little pilgrimages to the pomegranate orchard, near the five tall poplar trees; the breathless, perspiring excitement that was to be felt in stealing into those ruined, deserted little villages—deserted, that is, except perhaps by the fellows from the opposite hills. But most of all, I wish I could convey to you something of the sudden sense of awe that fell on me one night, when, entirely alone, and trying to locate a certain fig-tree, I came across a small straw-thatched hut, tucked away in a little ravine I never remembered having seen before.

Softly I crept up to the doorway, waited for a moment to make sure that no sound came from within, and then entered. Marking first that there were no cracks through which the moonlight was piercing, I struck a match and looked anxiously round the room. A small, rickety-looking table, and an equally rickety-looking chair drawn up to it—that was all. Then I noticed that on the table was a small piece of candle, and, lying only a foot away from this, a thin, black-bound book—a copy of Rupert Brooke with the leaves turned down at the page:

> . . . And I shall find some girl, perhaps,
> A better girl than you,
> With eyes as wise, but kindlier,
> And lips as soft, but true.
> And I daresay she will do.

Oh, God, this was rich! Who, in the name of all that

was wonderful, was the lovesick buffoon in the battalion who stole away into this lonely little straw-thatched hut at nights so that he might the more reflectively read Rupert Brooke? Then I turned to the fly-leaf and read the name:

NICOLAS DIMITRI.

Several moments, I think, must have elapsed before I realised the tremendous significance of my discovery—that the book in my hand belonged to a man from the opposite hills, who, even as I stood there, might enter to claim it. Quivering with excitement I thrust the book hurriedly into my pocket, blew out the light, and went outside.

Do not ask me to explain why it was that the next time I visited the straw-thatched hut in the ravine I should leave on the rickety little table the only book of poetry I ever carried during the war—a small, leather-bound edition of Omar Khayyam. All that I know is that it seemed to me the only and natural thing to do; and I can still recall very vividly the excitement I felt when, a night or two later, I crept away from my patrol to see if the exchange had been accepted. Yes, the table was quite empty—quite empty except for the same innocent stump of candle. And then I suddenly noticed a certain peculiarity about that candle. Instead of standing erect, as I first saw it, it was now lying on its side, and trailing away from the wick was a long line of grease spots, stretching not only across the table, but half way across the floor to where lay a large, flat boulder. In a flash the thought came to me that I was intended to lift that boulder; and two minutes later, hands quivering with excitement and heart throbbing against my ribs, I was eagerly deciphering, as a raw youth might read his first love letter, the curiously stilted, Latin-looking hand of a man who told me that, although born a Bulgar, and now fighting as a Bulgar, he had spent the greater part of his life in America, where he had learned to understand and appreciate English art and literature beyond all other.

That letter still lies before me—one of the dozen, tattered, carefully hoarded pages I have just revealed to Joan;

but little purpose could be served, I am afraid, by quoting it in full. He makes great fun, I see, because, above all poets, I should choose as my grand consoler in the war an old Persian who died eight hundred years ago. "I think you must be very, very English," he writes. "I do not wonder that the *Rubaiyat* so appeals to you. You English like to think yourselves stolid, unshakable and imperturbable; but how much of this, I sometimes wonder, is due to some curious kink of Oriental fatalism about you?" And then there is the letter in which he reflects on the mutually futile, bloody butchery that went on all round us in those sublime spring evenings of that mournful year of 1917. Bitter, searing things he writes, as only a man can write who has recently returned from ghastly, naked realities. But I will not trouble you with these. Poor Dimitri! To quote them now would be to mock him.

I leave it entirely to the psychologists to explain the strange compelling attraction, the almost romantic glamour, that somehow pervaded this friendship of ours, right from the very beginning. Times there must have been, of course, when both of us must have reflected that what we were doing was utterly wrong and deceitful: that we were committing a crime for which, had they discovered it, the countries whose uniforms we wore would immediately have had us shot, and buried like so much loathsome carrion; and yet, speaking for myself, I can only say that always uppermost in my mind was a feeling of stupendous glamour about our association—heightened a hundredfold, I suppose, because only two people in the world knew of it. And the very fact that it was illicit, I think, only grew in time to be a still further attraction. I began to understand, I am afraid, something of the irresistible lure that men have felt in illicit dealing and illicit love, ever since the world began. I am persuaded to think, indeed, that there were many ways in which this association between Dimitri and myself resembled very much an illicit love affair. All that I seemed to live for, at that time, was the weekly letters, hidden under the large, flat boulder in the little straw-thatched hut; and at all sorts of odd moments during the day I would find myself staring across that twenty miles

wide valley picturing, somewhere on those opposite hills, the writer of them—wondering what he was doing and whether he ever similarly wondered about me.

And then, as time went on, it seemed that letters would no longer suffice; we began to make gifts to one another. I started by directing attention to a small box of cigarettes and a packet of chocolate that might be found hidden in the hollow of a certain fig-tree a dozen yards further down the ravine; he responded by leaving me a bunch of grapes, of a small black variety I have never known surpassed for sweetness. Then the gifts no longer sufficed: Dimitri began to talk of photographs—"civilian preferred," as he expressed it. For a long time I hesitated about that. Either of us, I pointed out, might at any time be killed, and to be found with enemy photographs in our possession might lead to an infamy which certainly neither of us deserved. But in the end I yielded; and even now, as I write, there stares mutely, half-defiantly up at me from the midst of the tattered letters the picture of a tall, rather lanky sort of youth, with that peculiarly elusive kind of face we are inclined to call "temperamental," and with a mass of jet black hair brushed abruptly back from his forehead.

Only one thing remained for us now, of course, and that was to meet; but both of us, I think, shrank from mentioning this. For here, it seemed, we reached the one great forbidden sin: the pitch, once touched, that must inevitably defile. The wonder was, I often thought, that we did not meet by accident, and one night, I remember, we nearly did meet by accident. For some reason or other Dimitri seems to have been unusually indiscreet. When within twenty yards of the hut I could see the tiniest glimmer of light piercing through the door, which had evidently been closed with insufficient care. Then the light suddenly went out, and a minute later I heard footsteps moving towards the opposite end of the ravine, and a soft musical whistle mournfully mingling with the melancholy croaking of the frogs. The tune was Tschaikovsky's "Chanson Triste." For fully a quarter of an hour I must have remained there and listened, a cold sweat breaking over me lest on his return journey he should run into my patrol, whose duty (as,

indeed, it was mine) would be either to take him prisoner or to kill him. But nothing happened.

Quietly I stole into the hut and sought for my usual letter under the large flat boulder. It amounted to nothing more than a note: "Shall be going from here end of this week" he had scribbled; "hope we shall meet sometime." What those words may convey to you—set out, as you will see them, in cold, matter-of-fact print—I do not know. I only know that as I stood there in that dull, flickering candle-light, and with the guns of the town ringing greedily, unappeasingly in my ears, there only seemed one course open to me.

"We must meet now, Dimitri," I wrote. "Wednesday, midnight. Come, I shall be here. I shall not fail."

Sometimes I find myself believing that hidden away somewhere in this stricken, blighted world lies some grim, smirking God of War whose awful charge it is to keep inviolate the relentless, age-long tenets of his creed. The fact remains that I never did meet Dimitri—not, at least, in the manner I had suggested. A thousand times my mind must have rehearsed, and endured again, the crowded incident of that tragic Wednesday—the wild, poignant fluctuation of it all: the glorious elation at our imagined meeting, the unspeakably abysmal depths of its realisation. And a thousand times still, I am afraid, my mind must rehearse and endure it again.

Almost with the fastidiousness of a woman preparing to meet her lover you see me that Wednesday afternoon pottering about my little dug-out, and paying what little attention I could to my personal appearance, my heart throbbing the while its mad, unrestrainable song of secret exultation. Emperors, Prime Ministers, Commanders, not even the "Bloody Beast of War" itself, I sing to myself, can keep Dimitri and me—apostles of the new world that is to arise from all this crimson chaos—from meeting. Then, almost more quickly than I can write it down, the blow fell. Ryan suddenly came blundering into my dug-out.

"Heard?" he said.

"Heard what?" I demanded.

"Stunt on," he answered. "Patrol's going out to-night with a definite job on. Going out to see if we can get hold of a 'Johnny,' or nobble him. Don't know whether you've ever seen it, old man, but in one of the ravines down there there's a little straw-thatched hut. Somehow had my suspicions about that hut for a long time; thought I saw a light there once, but wasn't quite sure. But other night not only saw light but saw a 'Johnny' too—passed within ten yards of me, other side of some trees, whistling away as cool as a cucumber. So surprised, didn't know what the 'ell to do. Frightened to say anything about it at first; and then I thought I'd miss out that bit about being only ten yards away and tell the O.C. that I'd observed a whole outpost of 'em concentrating on this hut. 'What time was this?' says the Old Man, as keen as mustard. 'Somewhere about midnight, sir,' I said. 'Right-o,' says the Old Man, 'we'll give 'em outpost to-night.' "

The glass by which I had been shaving threw back at me the ashen, livid impotence of my face. What happened in the next minute or two I cannot exactly say, but as soon as ever I decently could, I think, I forced my way out of the dugout, and stumbled half-blindly to where I could gaze, as I had gazed a hundred times before, across that twenty miles wide valley, over which Nicolas Dimitri, unless I could stop him, must shortly march to his death—and die thinking that I, the man whom he had hailed as an affinity of a nobler, cleaner world, had lured him to that death. Unless I could stop him! But how could I stop him? Even if it were possible for me to get to him I had not the slightest idea where to go. For that had always been an unwritten law of honour between us: we knew of no destination other than the little straw-thatched hut. All that I knew was that he was somewhere over there, somewhere spread over twenty miles, and unless I could stop him to-night he would be killed—thinking himself as surely killed by me as though mine were the hand that pierced a dagger through his heart.

I will not harass you with all the frenzied detail of that night. Only one agony seemed to be spared to me—and that was that, instead of being sent with the party actu-

ally attacking the hut, I was detailed to assist in cutting off any escape at the far end of the ravine. Of my reflections as we trailed down the hill into the valley that night I am afraid I can tell you very little. I do not think I had any. Why, I don't know; but somehow I seem to have decided quite definitely that Dimitri would be killed, so that my mind became blank and numbed, as a man's mind becomes numbed on the funeral journey of a very dear relative. I do not seem to have been aware of anything until, after we had been waiting at the end of the ravine for about half-an-hour, a dozen rifle shots rang out. Then immediately the stupor left me and I raced up the ravine.

"Too late, old man," Ryan met me and laughed into my face. "Only one of 'em, but would persist in fighting. Fought like 'ell. Got it clean in the stomach—two places, poor beggar! Peg out any minute. Got a fag on you?"

Less than a dozen yards away, lying in the centre of the ravine, along which, less than five minutes ago, he had raced liked a hunted beast, I could see him dying—not dying as the war artists so sinfully and successfully paint men dying, but in all the vulgar agony of a badly butchered animal.

He had just been feebly gulping at a bottle of water held to his lips by a stretcher-bearer when the moonlight fell on my face, and I could see that he knew me. A minute later and he was dead—but in that minute there came over his face such a look as I do not remember having seen on any human face before. The stretcher-bearer, I could see, accepted it as simply the dying spasm of a particularly painful death. But I knew differently. Physical pain was the least thing I saw there. I knew that Nicolas Dimitri died the most hopeless, the most despairing death that it is possible for any man to die—died thinking himself not only sacrificed to a world in madness, but taunted, in his last dying glimpse, by the irrefutable betrayal and degradation of all those finer, nobler impulses he had worshipped as a world's redemption. Not pain, not hatred, not longing was written on that face, but just a look of infinite, unutterable despair. . . .

And to-night, rising hazily above the violins, as they

throbbed out "Chanson Triste," gradually taking form and consolidating, until I could see every line and twinge of it, I saw that face again.

TWO MASTERS[1]

By ARTHUR WHEEN

(From *The London Mercury*)

"What is earth
But the shadow of heaven and things therein,
Each to each other like more than on earth is thought?"
—*Milton.*

I

THE remnants of the Australian Expeditionary Force which survived the hardships of the campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsula, were in December, 1915, withdrawn to Tel-el-Kebir, in Egypt, there to recruit themselves, and to be equipped afresh, before resuming the field. It was there that I joined them. I found the majority of the platoon to which I was allotted to be untried recruits like myself. For the rest, there was a small sprinkling of "Peninsula men," who were intended to serve as the little leaven, to arouse in us novices some sense of *esprit de corps,* and to hand on to us the tradition of Gallipoli. These veterans undertook their task with relish. They were fortunate in having a most uncritical audience, and our inexperience afforded their instinct for a tale well told all the licence that unblushing artists desire. I do not know with what quantity of "mild, allaying Thames" the older men amongst us took these strong waters. I suspect that many found them too good to be true. But for my part, my credulity was more than equal to the best of them. Though they exhausted the resources of Titian's palette, and painted with the astonishment of Rubens, I doubted nothing. My simplicity was the despair of their imaginations. I was a very young soldier, and still of an age for hero-worship. Such prodigies of arms as would have made Rodomonte blush for shame left me wide-eyed as youthful Raleigh by

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the sea. The pleasure I had in their stories was only less than my admiration of the *dramatis personæ.*

Ralston, the sergeant, alone of the old soldiers, was no party to these tales. He was, physically, a slight, undersized man, with stooping shoulders which gave him an unsoldierly appearance. The cast of his countenance, too, was unusual in a soldier. His face was small, and the features sensitive and delicate; his eyes were large and deep-set. When in repose he seemed dreaming in whimsy and melancholy. His whole expression suggested something fragile and feminine that sorted ill with adventure and the alarms of war. His leisure time was generally spent sketching, either in the camp or in the native village beyond the canal. Now it would be a picture of blazing sunlight, with troops lounging in every posture of oppressed lassitude, and again one of a siesta in the cool obscurity of the bazaar. In the evenings, while some wrote home-going letters, and some played cards, while others yarned and I listened, he would sit, surrounded with candles, a brush at his ear and another in his teeth, silently putting finishing touches to his sketches. It intrigued me to imagine what part this placid man—so intent upon elaborating his charming pictures, smiling now with pleasure over some happy touch of colour, now puzzling out the secret of the warp and woof of the desert haze—what part could such as he have in this drama of war, so serene and so detached one would say he was unaware of it all. And yet he *had* served, all through the Gallipoli campaign, with these others. The incongruity of it seemed the height of comedy to me.

One evening I lay in the tent reflecting on a fine tale of a midnight attack I had just heard; the narrator had concluded his story, as a matter of course, with the words: "so we drove off the Turks." I thought how fine a thing it must be to háve driven off the Turks—actually to have been a maker of history. As I lay thus musing my eyes were on Ralston, busy, as usual, with his brushes; he was dreaming absently over his picture—the very personification, it seemed to me, of all that was naïve and ineffectual in this world of deeds.

"Ralston, whenever did *you* make history?" I asked with impudent indulgence.

Recovering himself from his reverie, he said mockingly: "Oh that were Ercles' vein." He returned to contemplate his picture, and holding it at arm's length he repeated softly to himself:

> Rursus quid hostis prospiciat sibi
> Me nulla tangat cura, sub arbuto
> Jacentem aquae ad murmur cadentis,
> Dum segetes Corydona flavae
> Durum fatigant.

Then turning to me with a smile that had something of pathos and regret in it he said:

"I'd rather make pictures."

"I guessed as much," I said, adding, "How in the name of miracles do you come to be a sergeant?"

The others looked up from their cards and their letters like so many grazing deer startled at the chance breaking of a twig.

"Old age," he answered.

"Pay twenties," said Kennedy, and then, to me, "Carter, you're an ass!"

For a quarter-of-an-hour there was silence, and Ralston continued to touch up his sketch. At length he passed it over to me. It was a water-colour, excellently done so far as I could tell, picturing a scene common enough in the cultivations along the canal. It was of an ox, blind-folded, and driving a water-wheel by trudging ceaselessly a weary circle. Of the buckets fastened to the wheel some were plunging into the stream, others submerged, and yet others, brimming over, were rising from it and pouring the waters into the channels in gushing silver streams. After I had admired it some time Ralston said: "That's my answer, Carter. The Spirit of the Years at the making of History."

I glanced at the picture again, and was at a loss to understand.

"I see," I said, and nodded. I was beginning to dislike Ralston for a pretentious humbug.

"Let's have a look at it, Carter," said Kennedy. I

handed the picture to him and he examined it for a while. Kennedy was a scurrilous little Villon of a man, with the wit and ways of an apache.

"Saints and sinners, sabres and sandbags, you and me; it's all equal to a blind ox, eh, Ralston? Yes, damn me if it ain't. So *you* see what it means, do you, Carter? Trust a college education to teach a man to see as far into a brick wall as may be, and both ends of a conjuror's coat-sleeve. You'll be a useful man, Carter. See a long way in the dark, won't you?"

Then he broke off, laughing. I liked Kennedy. He was the very antithesis of Ralston—illiterate, of course, but a man of the world for all that, and ready for anything with a spice of adventure. I used to think of him admiringly as of the cunning Ulysses.

I have never quite understood that incident. Something had passed over my head, and it piqued me to think that maybe Ralston had been laughing at me. My vanity was more susceptible then, and mockery at the hands of such a fatuous dreamer as I judged Ralston to be was more than I could stomach. I grew more confident in the justice of my estimate of him as the weeks passed. He seemed to adopt an attitude of contemptuous indulgence toward my unconcealed enthusiasm for heroics. Often he would take the spice out of a tale of adventure and achievement by interrupting the narrator at the very crisis with some apt and vicious sarcasm. I could see that he was envious of the glamour which success in the field of action attached to his fellows, and which, in a world of deeds, effectually eclipsed the pale successes of a dilettante. I understood him, for all his talents, a mean-spirited fellow and a self-sufficient snob.

One evening, however, by some chance he and I, after the day's training, were strolling together on the desert plateau which overlooks the native village of Tel-el-Kebir. Below us stretched the camp, spreading on either hand its miles of white canvas, steeped in the light of many candles. The village lay amongst the crowding palms, and, distantly, a jogging lantern was carried by a traveller at a donkey-trot. The creaking of the dhows moored by the

bridge mingled on the breeze with the multitudinous murmur from ten thousand soldiers. About us were the earthworks of the battle of '82. And over all prevailed the romantic influence of an Egyptian moon, momently marking with silver light the passage of the wind across the dark waters of the canal.

Conversation had been desultory, and Ralston's reserve had not aided me in broaching the subject which it was in my mind to have out with him. We had approached one of the earthworks and mounted its over-generous parapet, when Ralston commenced walking at a leisurely pace along the length of it and back again, looking now here, now there, to right and left about him on the plain.

"Here's something to your mind, eh, Carter?" he said.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Ghosts everywhere! I guess, you're learned enough to love a paradox—to know a hawk from a handsaw?"

He was quizzing me again, and had scored, blast him! but I would be cautious and say nothing.

"Come," he said banteringly, "don't tell me you do not relish best the husks of thoughts. I'll bet you know words on the outside better than within."

Still I said nothing.

"But here's a paradox to be sure. Ghosts everywhere, and here are we, the only two perishable mortals on the field, walking up and down invulnerable in the very shock of the battle. All the order of magic reversed."

"Can't you ever see things as they are, Ralston?" said I impatiently. "You seem to live where facts are fancies, and only fancies facts—anywhere but here. Your values are all upside-down. You take the song for the bird, the shadow for the man, the man for his ghost, and the bird for a joy disembodied. You live like a fool in a dream. And what the devil does the war mean to you?"

"A nightmare," he said. "Yes," he continued, "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams. But you're sharper than I guessed, Carter. The music of a sounding bell means more to me than sound or bell. Before the war I thought the world was builded otherwise than it

would seem to be. I thought a slender thread of beauty held the world in peace. I lived in the cosmopolitan world of Petrarch—a peaceful world, the world of art and imagination; it seemed almost to be that other world where there are 'thrones, and temples of the gods among them, wherein in very deed the gods abide, and where the sun and moon and stars are seen as they really are.' Eternal peace was there. It seemed as though Lucretius' prayer to Venus had prevailed, and Mars had ceased to war. And I lived in a bower there, where there was 'sleep full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing.' But now I live nor here nor there. It seems it was a dream."

We had resumed our walk, and, speaking softly, his voice fell from cadence to cadence like the pulsing of a failing heart, as though he followed with wistful, weary chidings the retreating shadows. "Alas!" thought I, "poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into sedges." Illusions had been the commonplaces of his world, and now he stood disenchanted. Like a fearful mariner of ancient times on nightly trafficking, for the first time he had heard the shouting of the Merry Men, and no stars shone.

"And so you have lost heart? Is that it, Ralston?"

"I do not sift divinity," he said. "To me it seems that life's too full to shrink to the limits of a vendetta. But I have no courage of my own."

"I guessed as much," said I, rather pleased that I had judged so rightly. "You are envious of the careless courage of the others, too, aren't you?"

"Why, no," he answered. "Leave shambles to butchers, Carter. *Virtus* is out of date and place these days. That *is* dreaming. Let Ariosto make me a Paladin, mount me on Baiard, arm me with Durinda, and I'll chase a thousand Saracens a league into the sea, if need be; the poet so delights me. But your case is worse than mine, Carter. You *believe* in these things. Tell me, aren't you secretly scared by the tales these fellows tell? as though they were 'so many Alexanders'."

"Yes, afraid of myself. The times ask for heroes, and I mistrust myself," said I.

"Well you won't learn heroism from them, Carter—at

least, not from their tales. There's hardly one of them true. Can't you see they're laughing at you? You're more credulous than Quixote."

"Not true! You mean that, Ralston? Not true? You say they're not true?—Lord! What a fool I am!"

After a silence Ralston commenced speaking. He spoke in a tone I have never heard before nor since. It was low and measured and impassioned, as of one thinking aloud; he seemed to have forgotten me, and yet what he said was pertinent, or dimly seemed to be. It was as though he watched a spark glowing ever more brightly under a breeze, until it broke at last into a flame, and the flame into a forest fire—this, not in volume, but in intensity, of feeling. It made me think of some half-demented mystic.

"How often," said he, "during the arduous months on those desolate slopes, through long gazing I carried myself in thought to the summit of Hill Nine-seven-one—that unattainable Pisgah. From there, none knowing, I have looked across the Hellespont and seen Mount Ida and old Troy, and Timois and Scamander in deep valleys flowing. I saw the constellated heroes quit the heavens and fight again the battle on the plain. Standing with Apollo on that height (partisan to Hector for Andromache's sake), I heard the taunt to Diomed: 'Run, girl! run, coward!' My heart was with Lycaon as he clung about the knees of unpitying Achilles. In the dust I, too, mourned the friend Patroclus. I listened to the challenges of all the noisy braggarts, and counted the slaughter of the lusty heroes. I saw the corpses dam the swollen Xanthos. I waited, breathless, when Zeus held out the fatal balance, and when the scale of Hector sank to death, Apollo leave him without hope. . . . Deserted by the Gods! How dark the gloom! How sharp the agony! Hard of heart, indeed, are the Gods. I could endure this cruel fate no longer. Turning away in my thought, and looking far to the South and east beyond the Straits, I saw the coming dawn. 'See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament,' the sky proclaimed. And the unholy memory of that

face that launched a thousand ships,
And burned the topless towers of Ilium,

faded and dissolved before the glory of another face toward which all the eyes of the world are now turning—the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father. See at Bethany Helen of Troy kneeling before Jesus of Nazareth, wiping His Feet with her hair! This was the face that brought another fleet after three thousand years to Ilium. It was for Him that men have died upon those hills. I stood with Dante there, and saw in the fifth heaven the starry cross of shining spirits who have died fighting for the honour of Christ. Christ

> Beamed on that cross; and pattern fails me now.
> But whoso takes his cross and follows Christ
> Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
> When in the fleckered dawning he shall spy
> The glitterance of Christ. From horn to horn,
> And 'tween the summit and the base, did move
> Lights, scintillating; . . . . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And as the chime
> Of minstrel music, dulcimer and harp,
> With many strings, a pleasant dinning makes
> To him, who heareth not distinct the note;
> So from the lights, which there appeared to me
> Gathered along the cross a melody
> That, indistinctly heard, with ravishment
> Possessed me. Yet I marked it was a hymn
> Of lofty praises; for there came to me
> 'Arise,' and 'Conquer,' as to one who hears
> And comprehends not.

The thoughts of mortal men are timid; but surely here is truth. For has He not said: 'Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world'? This is the new vision. This only gives me courage now, and in this faith I mean to live and die. O man, who has suffered burdens heavier to be borne, believe that God will bring an end to this as well.

And it is not by *virtus*, but by virtue, that the victory is to be won, for the measure of courage is in the poise of

faith against fear. Courage will be given me, and I shall be taught to endure; so must I hope.

> Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano;
> e sarai meco senza fine cive
> di quella Roma onde Cristo e romano."

And so he ceased from speaking. To me it had seemed so deranged and unearthly that I had ceased to try to comprehend it. I thought only of the tragi-comedy of such a man lending a hand to put the world to rights. I tried to imagine him as a soldier in the stress of the charge, but instead I saw a monk in a sub-alpine monastery, weeping as he illuminated some devoted manuscript with pictures of the Cross of Christ. And yet he had done me a service. He had put out the little lights I thought were stars, and I would dream no more. But after all *my* thoughts had been small thoughts, my love, no troublous fire; and so I soon addressed myself to the future in "the light of common day," with no glances backward. Thereafter I dropped naturally into the expedient, the hand-to-mouth existence, which only is profitable in the army, caring not for any "thing of beauty."

As we walked down to the camp the dew, which is so heavy in the desert, was already falling. I remarked on it, and Ralston said: "Do you know, Carter, it almost tempts me to put out a fleece, like Gideon, to learn if God is with us."

"Still dreaming, are you, Ralston?" I said; but he did not answer. Better for him, surely, had he, too, been "a less valiant piece of dust."

II

It was not long after our arrival in France that I was again compelled to revise my estimate of Ralston, the complexity of whose character had been a continual bewilderment to me. It was with unmixed astonishment that I saw him for the first time in action. I had come to think of him as a man too rich in imagination, too sensitive

to conscience, too gifted in understanding, and too deficient in vigorous character, to face the reality of war without an access of fear which would paralyse him for action. I was prepared to excuse him, in circumstances which must in their nature unman him. I say I was amazed at his conduct. His courage was of a character which marked it as unique. Everywhere he was serene and imperturbable, and in an extremity he was the rallying-point for us all. He carried himself with the confidence of one who had seen horses and chariots of fire in the heaven. As though faith were the one thing necessary to the well-being of man he would keep his heart in the name of heaven.

Yet as the months wore on it seemed to me, who saw much of Ralston, and observed his bearing with what I imagined to be a more intimate understanding than others around him, that the quality of his courage, and, indeed, his whole temper, was undergoing some subtle and powerful change. His serenity was less even and unmistakable. His daring grew greater, but seemed of a new order. I thought that he went on desperate enterprises, not as one who scorned Death with unassailable faith, but as one who half-welcomed him, and sought for deliverance from some perpetual and inescapable woe. And yet I could not measure Ralston aright. When I had marked him out as a man of broken purpose and trembling faith, he would suddenly overthrow my judgment by some act of intrepid devotion, of sustained and matchless coolness, which belied all my suspicions of desperation and infirmity.

Ralston was commissioned, and, serving continuously, was more than once decorated for distinguished service. In course of time, and the fulness of seniority, I advanced to the rank of corporal in his platoon. March, 1918, found me, by dint of many time-serving schemes, at an Officers' Training School in England. Thereafter I learnt only by occasional letters how it went with Ralston. At Villers-Bretonneux he was recommended for the Victoria Cross; May and June he was on secret service in the enemy's lines; during July he fought in the "mad minute" near Sailly-Laurette, and led his company on the morning of August 8th.

I received a letter from him later in the month. It was

written, so I reckoned, from the neighborhood of Proyart. Settling myself comfortably in my punt, I drifted idly as I read.

28-8-18.

Dear Carter,

Your short letter to hand yesterday. Pleased to hear of your good fortune.

By Jove, it is a lovely night, this early morning. A full moon, a chaste sky, and a soft breeze. Myself, I have a headache. I am here to present moonshine. The heavens are telling tales of waggons hitched up to stars, who whip behind worse than omnibus drivers. And the light wind is "Wind Dangerous." How infectious is this villainy of man! Our sins contaminate the innocent children of the air, and load their breath with poisons. O God! my brain is fire. Weary and sick! Weary and sick! I am weary both body and mind. I sigh out my soul for rest. Evil fancies infest me. They scamper through the chambers of my mind till I am mad with fear. O peace! sweet peace! where is it gone? *Ubique pax!* the false prophet cried in the moment that a dagger sought his heart. There is no peace. The morning star is quenched in blood.

Now I have served my day; and spent are all the riches of my mind.

> Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
> My staff of faith to walk upon,
> My gown of glory (hope's true gage),
> And thus I'll make my pilgrimage.

But no, it is too late. This is dreaming at my prayers. So I would wish to go. So I had thought to go. But now . . .

Love not overmuch. But you are prudent. Mistrust the fair ones of the world. And where is a fairer to bewitch a man's heart than his country? It is the fairest thing on earth—most like to heaven. It is the best we know. Carter, I have lost my soul for her. Body and life, these were not enough. Give her love and she requites with dishonour. Like Acrasia she changes men to beasts. But men do not desert her.

See the mind of beastly man
That hath so soone forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth with vile difference
To be a beast.

O love of country with despair of heaven! Was this the best that Christ could do? If they who love Him are not of the world, and yet are in the world, but may not love the beauty of the world, all of them are lost. The Comforter has delayed until too long. Must the melody of the earth alone remain untunable to the music of the spheres, and the harper in the streets of Babylon ever be abhorred by the sweet minstrels of heaven as a maker of discord? Is there nothing faithful in the music of this tavern-world? Then will we write the doctor for an ass who heard in it, with ravishment, a sensible fit of that harmony which the universe, well understood, would afford the understanding. Is the fairness of the earth so hateful to the gods? It was not so when gods were reprobates. How are we happier now? The faithful citizen of earth in times of war renounces for ever the citizenship of heaven. But as the player said, Faust begot Euphorion, the modern man, on the body of Helen the Grecian; and we, the offspring of it, will love the fairness of the world and share the fatal curse. First among the moderns Machiavelli said: I prefer my country to the salvation of my soul. If Christ had meant to save us, better had He prayed the Father to take us out of the world, else how can we be kept from evil? We dare not set the Good that is to fatal hazard for the Good that may be, and may be but a dream. Since Doubt first darkened into Unbelief—how long ago it seems to me I cannot tell—shade after shade came grimly on my soul, till now no more I see the love of Christ in the starry heaven, but have the "fixed, starless, Tartarean black." Since first I set my country, first or last, before the Love of Christ, the Sky is turned to brass, and returns my prayers to me a mockery. In Germany I thrice denied Him; now when I call on Him, He does not lean to me from out the skies, but I hear His Voice denying me before

His Father which is in heaven. Deserted by the Gods!—Heigh ho! Carter, do you remember? Deserted by the Gods! How dark the gloom! How sharp the agony!—The Voice I hear is the voice of Michael Angelo's Christ in Judgment, saying: "He hath loved father and mother more than Me; he hath loved son and daughter more than Me. He is not worthy of Me, for he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." To choose between two all-possessing Loves is a thing too difficult for the uncertain heart of man.

Let me tell you, Carter, what adventures I had in Germany. You will not understand the half, but it will steady my resolve to set it down—to confess the greatness of my sin and of my love, for each is the measure of each.

As you know, I went impersonating that German artillery-liaison officer we captured by Warfusée-Abancourt. Already I had pledged my soul to my country, and this spying business, this utmost degradation that a country can demand of its citizen, seemed a small thing to me then. Already I despaired; I had courted death for months, and this seemed to make the longed-for respite certain. The staff had told me there was one chance in thousands I would succeed in the adventure, but to me it wore all the features of death in honourable dishonour. I passed through the lines; and by the unsuspicious kindliness of heart of one man I was accepted, and carried through my task with ease, and profit to my country. Again I was serving two masters. As a German artillery-officer I was ranging guns on my own countrymen, and as a British spy I was betraying the Germans who had accepted me. Nor was that the worst. I found in the unit to which I was attached a group of several German officers who were also students of literature. The man who had befriended me and saved my life on that first night, with whom I had cultivated a friendship, was one of them. With him I could have made that one friendship which in a life-time it is given men to enjoy. He was cultured, and simple to the point of winsomeness; with sympathy he combined understanding, and with understanding the most refined modesty. Of all men I have met, to him my heart was warmed; in other times he would

have sat in the very arm-chair of my affection. I loved him as Jonathan loved David, as Achilles loved Patroclus. We were made for friendship. He seemed as happy to be with me as I with him. Schaeffer was his name. Hatzenfeld was mine. A curse be on the name! Never did I hear him use it to me but I saw a sword that hung above our ties of friendship.

Frequently he had entertained me as a guest in his dug-out when these men met to discuss literary subjects. It was after one such meeting that I made the first and only error in my impersonation. The others had already gone, and Schaeffer and I were sitting talking over "Faust," which had been the topic of the evening. I had become absorbed in the conversation, which turned on the crisis of the First Part. I had quoted in German the passage ending:

> Let what must happen, happen speedily!
> Her direful doom fall crushing on my head,
> And into ruin let her plunge with me.

I continued speaking rapidly, urging with great earnestness that after this point the play should go in one headlong down-rushing to the catastrophe, relentlessly as in Marlowe's tragedy. It was not until I saw the expression of ghastly amazement on Schaeffer's face, that I noticed how from the end of the quotation I had, in my absorption, lapsed into *English*. For some minutes neither of us spoke; but at length he took up the discussion where I had broken off, and behaved as though the incident had not occurred.

For some days afterwards I was in suspense, expecting, and almost hoping, that Schaeffer would denounce me. It was a time, too, for reviewing my position and my duty. My duty to my country, which, so far, I had placed above all others, required me to carry through my task of espionage. To secure myself in that, there must be no evidence against me. I saw that my country would require that I should kill my friend. But may one's country ask this of its citizens? Has man no rights against the state? It is unchristian, unholy, ignoble, hideous; it is devilish. Surely Kant spoke truly? and no human being may be used merely

as an instrument, as though there were no dignity in man, and that divinely appointed? Indeed I had found out—how long ago!—that no Christian could live entirely for the state, and still preserve his place in eternity. But I had ceased to be a Christian long ago. I was a leper in the presence of the elect. Yet I remained still a man, and a man's friend. And may the state ask me, as it asked Judas, to betray, to murder, friendship? Dear Country, most hated, most beloved! "Submit," she says, "it matters not to me what a man may think; he must obey." And still I loved her. If God be Love, then is patriotism the Deity Barbaric. When she is in peril then must her lovers give even their souls in her defence. Unhappy man to live in such a world!—At last my mind was made up. I would kill my friend if he did not denounce me first.

> It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
> Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
> It is the cause.

After a few days Schaeffer again invited me to join his Convivium Philosophicum; he was reading a paper on A. W. Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet*. His paper was admirable. It traced the rise and development of Shakespearean criticism in Germany, from Lessing's first revelation of the purport of *Romeo and Juliet*, in his *Dramatic Notes* to the work of Gervinus at Heidelberg and further, till at last philosophy in criticism succumbed to history. Schaeffer's interpretation of *Hamlet* was based on the solution of the problem of the play first suggested in the *Wilhelm Meister;* that purpose being "to delineate a mind oppressed by the weight of an obligation which he fails to discharge." As Schaeffer developed this theme, it seemed to me as though he was explaining to my heart what until then had been a mystery and a wretchedness to me—he seemed to be telling me why he had delayed to expose my imposture. As he read his face became haggard and his voice at many points almost failed him. I began to understand. And if I understood, then I need not, aye, and could not, hold to my resolve—need not, if he had decided not to denounce

me; could not, if he would show me that one's country may not ask a man to sacrifice his friend.

When he had concluded his paper there was little to be said of pertinence. One truculent, intolerant fellow—by the happy irony of chance his name was Freundlich—reading the passion of the moment into things not for an age, but for all time, drew patriotic satisfaction from explaining how Voltaire, the Frenchman, with characteristic blindness, had failed to appreciate the significance of *Hamlet*. At this Schaeffer turned his head to me and smiled.

I lingered after the others had gone their ways. Schaeffer prepared coffee and we sat to talk.

"You understood?" he asked.

I nodded.

"Is the war so horrible to you too?" I asked.

"No," said he, "it is necessary. I live my inner life apart. The Kingdom of God is within. No more than the Kingdom of Christ was of this world, is the Kingdom of the Spirit of this world."

"But what of Germany?" said I. "What of every nation? Can one be loyal to the Prince of the World and to the Prince of Heaven?"

"It is necessary," he replied, "that is the teaching of the state. Submission is what the state demands. It insists on acquiescence; it exists in the accomplishment of its will. We are soldiers, and our countries, yours and mine, must be obeyed. We must keep patriotism apart from the Love of Christ."

"But how can man serve two masters?" I asked. "If Christ says: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend,' and the state demands that a man should take the life of his friend, against which must one sin?"

Schaeffer did not answer, but covered his face in his hands.

"Schaeffer," said I, "for God's sake expose me. I am not afraid of death."

But he did not move.

"For friendship's sake, for mercy's sake, tell me, Schaeffer, that the world is not so alien to heaven. Are not the

Stars and the Moral Law the only necessities of our universe? And if the Sun should exceed his measures, the Furies, the auxiliaries of Justice, would track him down? Can there be two moral codes? Is not our true country that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like? Is it not bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary line, by so much as a hair's breadth, does she not cease to be our mother, and choose rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca?* Will not a man perform the duties of this city only? I know Socrates' answer. 'It is reasonable,' said he. Tell me it must be so, Schaeffer."

"The state says," he answered, "that we may not sacrifice the harmony that is in the body, though it be for the symphony that is in the soul. Bitter is the necessity of it. It knows no law. In the world the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."

I rose to take my leave. Schaeffer took me by the hand and said: "What is your name, Hatzenfeld?"

"Ralston," I answered.

Then he bade me good-night, saying, "I will do it when I can, Ralston."

It seems the world is so. Even Schaeffer would knuckle to necessity. I had been pleading with him for his life. In the service of the state we were both bound by the oath, as ancient gladiators who swore "to suffer themselves to be chained, burned, beaten, killed with the sword, and to endure all that true gladiators suffer from their master, religiously engaging both body and soul in his service." My duty was clear to me, as Schaeffer's to him. But I would dare it first, for I now cherished no illusions.

Waking I was calm, and composed. I was deadly sure, as a man with one idea. But sleep was haunted with most hideous dreams. No sooner had I fallen asleep that night than all my fears and thoughts took shape. Now I was a tree in the twilight grove of the suicides. The Furies perched upon the branches and devoured the foliage. Howling dogs sat round about and tore at the trunk. Now I seemed in a world of thunder, and I was a citizen of Baby-

lon. The Queen of it I saw, dressed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden chalice in her hand. Droning voices came from out the city of New Jerusalem, calling to me: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her punishments." Then the Spirit and the bride said "Come," and he that heard it said "Come. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him drink of the water of life freely." And I would have answered: "I come," but I could make no sound. Then fell the mighty mill-stone in the sea. And then the voices of harpers, and of musicians and pipers and trumpeters who rejoiced in the streets of Babylon, perished on the air, and darkness and a great silence covered the earth. Such dreams as these followed one another through all the hours of my sleep.

In the morning I awoke feeling ill and feverish. Schaeffer had been stirring since "stand-to," and greeted me cheerfully. He asked me my programme for the day, and I told him that I was going up to the observation post to do some registering. He asked if he might accompany me, and in about ten minutes we were walking down the communication trench. We had made about half the distance, and Schaeffer was walking some yards ahead of me, when the firing of anti-aircraft machine-guns burst out along the front. A low-flying English plane was over, and everyone with a rifle was firing at it. This was the moment, and I prayed—to whom should I pray? To Christ?—to the Powers of Evil to support my arm; then almost before I knew it, I had fired, and Schaeffer was dead.

Thereafter my career was easy, and, as you know, I have returned unharmed. But who am I that am so safe returned? My dreams are shattered, my faith is gone, my heart is broken now, and if I loiter longer than the day my reason, tottering now, will fall in ruin.

There, Carter, listen to that noise behind the boards! Some wretched ghost is feeling with his hands along the cracks between the timber of my dugout walls. "A noise, and behold! a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." God! how the sweat stands on my brow! The place was built in 1915, and has not seen candle-light

since July of the Somme. He is peering at the flame between the chinks. I can tell it. Listen! it has quickened memory, and he is beating against the boards to attract my attention. But I'll have none of him. Hear him struggling to come out into the light! How wildly he beats against the boards with his hands! They knock sharply. I do not fear you, ghastly one! See! I hold the candle to you (see how it trembles), and I look into your eyes. Black hell, how deep they are! like Somme's cold pools! But surely sleep is there. Canst see a devil sparkle in the burning fire of mine, brother Death? I feel your chill-oozed breath upon my cheek. No! do not speak. I will not hear. How my mind reels!

I think I'll light another candle. That will help me to breathe more steadily. And anyhow, a man can see better with two candles than with one. No, 'tis nothing. A scavenging rat merely.

Can't you stop those infernal "eight inch" from making such a hideous noise when they burst? They jar and jolt my poor head until I think I'm mad.

Books! For the love of Allah! Books! Send me that poem by Francis Thompson. I want to read the lines again:

> And now my heart is as a broken fount,
> Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
> From the dank thoughts that shiver
> Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

No! Not books. Send me pictures. Send me Da Vinci's Head of Christ. And Dürer's Melancholy. But no—send me nothing.

I see the dawn is coming, and a fog. The trees that line Agrippa's Roman road, that shoots straight as an arrow into the due east beyond our front, look like phantoms of old Cæsar's legions marching past. They are not really, but just trees, some taller than others. I wonder how many thousands of soldiers, for the thin comfort of a *solde* have dragged themselves along that weary straight, with big heads and little hearts, since Julian? Count me for one. But I don't suppose you know.

Things are much the same over here; in fact quite the same. On and On, or Back and Back, St. Quentin or Amiens, it's all the same. There's nothing Different here, no On-the-other-hand. Suns rise and set, and so do moons, with a sameness that is commonplace. It wears good temper threadbare. No doubt you thought the same when you were here. Everybody thinks the same when they are here. Same, same, same! Oh! Jemima Sameness, my truly-wedded wife, how heartily I loathe you! you wretched, blear-eyed dolt!

My spirit is lying like a little heap of bones on the barren desert of my mind. Ah God! no peace.

> How gladly would I meet
> Mortality my sentence, and be earth
> Insensible! how glad would lay me down
> As in my mother's lap! there I should rest
> And sleep secure.

Sleep and no sleep: peace and no peace. Must I live still? an agony pendant on the long chain of my begetting, each link an ecstasy. May I not drop off into the abysmal death beneath? Not sink like stone in the "oblivious pool"?

One candle is gone out. I'll snuff the other.

Good-night,

RALSTON."

So I finished reading the letter, and sat smiling at his fantastic posturing. Returning to my rooms in College I found a letter from the battalion awaiting me. It was to the effect that Ralston had walked out alone into No Man's Land on the morning of August 29th, and had been killed.

Then there was cowardice in his woman's heart after all.

THE CAGE BIRD[1]

By FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

(From *The Story-Teller*)

FOR story-telling there is one place that beats all others in the world, and that is a campfire in tropical Africa. It has no distractions. Even in a cosy library with curtained windows and coal-fire burning, one's eyes will wander to the light that plays over the backs of books or watch the creeping hands of a clock. In Africa you get none of these things to disturb you. The world shrinks into a small circle of firelight. Beyond the edge of it nothing exists at all; and within it only the story-teller and his listeners.

And that's not all: the men one meets in the scent of wood-smoke have something to say. There are few books in the bush-veld, and those mostly bad ones; but Africa is a country of full lives, and of these you only hear from the mouths of the men who have lived them. Great story-tellers! You sit and listen and the world drifts away from you so that the sputter of a green branch in the fire makes you jump. And then you see yourself sitting on your haunches, the glow of the fire, the fumes that sting your eyes; and all around you, in a haze of Boer tobacco (that tastes like hay in Europe, but in Africa is the best smoke in the world), you see other listeners who have not awakened and still inhabit the world of enchantment that you have just left. So you reach out for another branch to throw on the fire, or give the embers a kick. And the voice of the chap who is telling the story goes on, and on, and on.

The best hand at the game I ever met was Charlie Murray, and he knew it. Get him after a dinner of grilled eland-steak and a peg of whisky, and he'd talk you to sleep: not because his stories were sleepy, but from sheer staying power. Murray was a tremendous chap. He rode

[1] Copyright, 1925, by Francis Brett Young.

sixteen stone, with long stirrup leathers, like the Boers, so that his feet nearly touched the ground on either side of his rat of a hunting pony. A tall, stiff figure, with shrewd blue eyes, a yellow moustache, and cheeks sun-dried like biltong: a dead shot, and the best of company.

When I knew him he had settled down to ranching on the edge of the Berg, which is the loveliest land in all Africa and as lovely as any in the world. He knew that it was beautiful, and warmed when one praised it; but though his life was busier than that of most men of his age, he lived in the past. And such a past! African born—his father had been a Free-Stater—Murray had fought in five wars. He had seen the map of Africa shaken like a kaleidoscope, and helped to shake it. And yet he was no politician. He knew a man and esteemed him whatever his race or language: Dutch, Kaffir or English were the same to him, for he spoke them all. It sounds as though I am shifting from my point; but that is not so. It is the fairness and sportsmanship of the man's nature that come out so clearly in this queer story of his childhood. You can hear it and say to yourself: "That's Charlie Murray all over!" From that day to this he has scarcely changed a hair's-breadth. "Give a man a sporting chance!"—that was Murray's motto in life.

II

It happened, as I say, when he was quite a kid. They were living in Smitsdorp, a little town, important in its way, that lay a few miles north of the Caledon River that marks the boundary between the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State. That is important to remember. His father was prosperous. Wool, I take it. Yes, it must have been wool; for I remember a story that Murray once told me. He was playing alone at the bottom of the garden with a little Kaffir, when one of the house boys came rushing down upon them, picked them both up—one under each arm—and ran off, shaking the life out of them, to the house. Murray remembered all his sins and thought he was in for a hiding.

But it wasn't that. The house was full of the big,

side-whiskered men of that generation, talking seriously together. All were armed, and none took any notice of Charlie.

Then came his mother, scrambling down the bamboo ladder that led to the loft, with a couple of old Dutch elephant guns: brutes that would take a couple of ounces of lead and kick you into the middle of last week. When she saw him she gave a gasp. "Thank God!" she said, but she didn't kiss him. She told him to run and fetch a pot of mutton fat, of the kind that they used to boil down from the tails of sheep, to grease the guns with. When he came back she took it from him without a word, and the room was so full that he slipped under the table with a dog called Bles and the little nigger that had been snatched up beside him.

From this refuge he caught stray words of the men's conversation. They were talking about Moshesh—Moshesh and the Basutos. And then the farm boys came running in with great bales of wool with which they began to pack the windows, so that the house grew dark. He was frightened by the dark and the trampling; he hated the greasy smell of wool, and the dust under the table made him sneeze; so he crawled out on to the *stoep* at the back of the house and asked his special friend, a Cape boy named Klaas September, what it was all about. Klaas pointed to the hills, the great lion-coloured foothills crouching in front of the Maluti Mountains. "Kaffirs coming," he said. "Moshesh is a great king. They will crack your skull with their kerries like a snail-shell, and put a sharp stick into your body. Look, you can see them!"

But all that Charlie saw was a number of black dots scattered over the mountain like sheep, and a few ponies moving along the skyline; and before he knew where he was his mother had found him again and hauled him in and put him to bed in the loft as a punishment for his wickedness and daring. So he poked a hole in the thatch, and saw the men ride out from Smitsdorp. He heard shots fined and saw puffs of smoke on the mountain till he grew bored and went to sleep.

Next day the Basutos had gone, the bales of wool were

carried back to the store and the windows washed clear of the grease stains that the bales had made on them.

A long digression—but such digressions were the essence of Murray's stories.

Murray's father, then, was a wool merchant. Wool was his staple business; but in those early days a man of spirit took his turn at many things. He was also a solicitor, practising in the little Landdrost's Court at Smitsdorp. The Boers were a litigious race, and Murray's father generally had his hands full; for men who had to stand their trial knew that if they had a good case he would fight for them and that the bench respected him. Indeed, the two men with whom he had most to do in Smitsdorp were the magistrate and the governor of the jail.

This last was a deplorable affair; but in that poor country there was no money for a better. It was a great hollow square, like a cattle kraal, with high walls of undressed stone and a *chevaux de frise* of broken glass on the top. The back of the building lay up against the side of a hill, so that the innermost cells were walled with red rock through which, in the rainy season, water oozed and dripped. The safest jail in the Free State it was called. Certainly it was the most noisome, and for this reason it was the custom of the judges in Bloemfontein to send the more desperate criminals there to serve their sentences. Most of them were cattle-stealers or horse-thieves; for in both these games the border natives excelled, and the job was sufficiently profitable for a white man to lend them a hand.

And here comes the most remarkable thing of all: that in a Boer country, among a race that has always recognized a colour-bar, black men and white men were imprisoned together. Murray's father had always protested against this; he had even induced the Smitsdorp burghers to petition against it; but the answer was always the same: the finances of the Free State wouldn't allow them to erect separate prisons; when more money came in other arrangements might be made. This troubled old Murray's mind. He knew that the jail was a disgrace to the country. Whenever he went there he came back sickened with its

filth and its darkness, full of pity for the chained savages inside. For they wore chains: a heavy ring round the neck, another for each ankle, and between them two lengths of half-inch chain that clanked as they walked. At night they were chained together, four to a cell. For food they had nothing but a small ration of mealie-pap.

The governor of the jail was a dark, violent Dutchman, a survivor of the Great Trek, who felt bitterly towards all living creatures, and respected nobody but Murray. He didn't live at the jail. He knew better than that. He had his own farm a mile or more away, and rode over in the evening to see the prisoners when his other cattle had been kraaled. For the rest they were left in the charge of four natives: a Griqua, named April, and three Zulus, proud of their guns and their uniform, lazy and tyrannous.

Except in winter, when it was swamped, the jail was badly supplied with water, and so it came into old Murray's mind one day that he might do himself and the prisoners a good turn by giving them a chance of a bath in his dam. Rensburg, the governor, wouldn't have understood it as an act of charity, so Murray suggested that the prisoners might do an afternoon's work on his land before they bathed, and Rensburg, who was always ready to help a man who might be of service to him in the future, particularly when he could do so at the public expense, consented. Murray's suggestion filled him with admiration. It was a slim idea to get the work of twenty men for nothing under the guise of charity. Murray knew what he was about!

III

And so Charlie Murray's story begins.

"By that time," he told us, "I was a boy of twelve or thirteen. They used to come over every Saturday, and I used to watch them grinding up the hill, twenty poor devils, sweating their souls out! The Zulu guard used to walk behind with a rifle, and April, the Griqua, in front with a pipe in his mouth. When they got to the top they'd halt and stand there panting like blown oxen, waiting to be told the work they had to do. Then they'd

drag off with their chains into the fields. I remember how they used to make a rush for the dam—just like cattle—when the work was over, stripping off their coats and splashing the water up over their naked chests and faces. They'd some fine chests on them too! April usually joined them, while the Zulu sat on the bank smoking, with his rifle across his knees. While they were bathing they became different creatures. You wouldn't believe it. They laughed and splashed one another like a lot of kids playing, and shouted out their Kaffir jokes to the guard on the bank and to me. I used to answer them back in Kaffir, too. It struck me as rather fine to be making jokes with murderers—particularly as I'd been forbidden to talk to them at all!

"Every Saturday, somehow or other, I managed to get down to the dam, and one day I got a surprise. I saw that one of the prisoners who had stripped along with the others was a white man. Earlier in the day, when they marched up, I hadn't noticed him. After that I couldn't help thinking of it, and when supper came along I couldn't keep it back.

" 'This afternoon one of the prisoners was a white man,' I said.

" 'How do you know that?' asked my father.

" 'I saw them bathing,' said I.

" 'Haven't you been told not to do that?' said my mother.

"But she, too, was interested. 'I thought all that was over,' she said. 'Didn't you speak about it?' She implied that if he *had* spoken about it, it was as good as done. 'Yes,' said my father, 'I did speak about it; but it's no good! They say they have no room anywhere else.' 'It's a scandal!' said my mother. 'Yes, it's a scandal, but we can do nothing.'

"No more was said about it, and for some weeks I saw no more of the white prisoner. Then, one afternoon, I came down into the orchard where the convicts were earning their bathe by cultivating in between the trees. I came down there for a special reason: I wanted a nest out of the top of an almond tree. Up I went, thinking myself no end of a climber, showing off a bit, because I knew the poor devils were watching me. Then I missed my balance

and came down a darned sight quicker than I'd climbed; and the next thing I knew was sitting up, dazed, with the white prisoner on the ground beside me. 'How be 'ee, son?' he said. 'A bit shaken up, I reckon. Was it that nest you were after?' I nodded. I didn't quite know where I was, but in another second that chap was shinning up the tree with his irons clanking on either side of him. He went up like a darned monkey. I'd never seen a man climb so quickly. When he came down he had the eggs in his mouth and handed them over to me. 'If that's what you wanted,' he said, 'you've come to the right shop. There's not a tree in the world that I couldn't climb, even with these things on.' I asked him why. 'Because I'm a sailor,' he said, 'and a sailor has to go aloft in a gale of wind that'd blow your guts out.' I'd never seen a sailor before, and told him so. 'If you don't believe me,' he said, 'look at this!' And he stripped his arm to the shoulder and showed me the tattooing of a dragon that he'd got done in China, with flames coming out of its mouth. And on his chest he'd got a full-rigged ship with all her canvas set. 'Not a sheet out of place,' he said. And he may have been right. At any rate you could read the ship's name. *Alabama* she was called.

"After that we stayed talking for a bit. I'd never met a man in my life I liked better, and it was a rum experience, anyway, to be yarning with a chap that was doing time. I hoped he was a murderer; but he didn't look like it. I can see him now; a sturdy fellow with a broad chest—it had to be, to hold that ship—and bright brown eyes like a bird's. He had a beard that grew right up to them, brown and curly without a gray hair in it, and a hooked nose peeling with sunburn. The guard was smoking at the other end of the orchard, and so we sat down under the almond tree and he began telling me yarns about places he'd seen all over the world, hunting whales, diving for pearls, doing all the things that boys like to hear about but which had never come my way. In the middle of Africa in those days we didn't run to books, and Crang—that was his name—was as good as a library.

"He'd been everywhere, or said he had, and in any case

I believed him. And then suddenly he dropped back into talking about his own home in Devonshire; a place called Ditsam if I remember rightly. My people never talked about England. My father had quarrelled with his parents and never made it up; he wanted to forget about it. But it seemed to me that boys had a much better time there than in the Free State, tickling trout in the streams and bird-nesting in the hedges. I didn't know what a hedge meant. There we sat talking and the time slipped by. And then, all of a sudden, I saw Crang rolled over from behind, and the Zulu guard kicking him as though he'd kill him. The brute had got boots on too. Poor old Crang got mixed up with his chain and couldn't find his feet. When he did he looked at me, and if I ever saw murder in a man's eyes I saw it that day. He never said a word. He just marched off to join the others with the Zulu blackguard kicking him behind. If he had showed fight I believe I should have joined in. I cried about it that night, though I didn't dare to tell my father. After seeing Crang's eyes I made sure he was in for murder, and that was a point in his favor.

"So, next week I waited for him—they were still working on the orchard, and we had another talk. By gad, it was like a new world to me. I'd never been farther from home than Bloemfontein. The week after, I pinched some of the tobacco my dad kept for the Kaffirs, and gave it to Crang. It was a treat to see the chap chew! 'You've saved my life, son, and that's the truth!' he told me. And it seemed to do him good to get things off his chest, to talk about the sort of life he led in the *tronk,* as the Boers call a jail. That Kaffir was a fair devil. You can understand it. The man was a savage by nature, and no check on him, for Rensburg drew his salary for looking after the jail, and left it at that. If ever a white man suffered hell, poor Crang did. They slept four together in a hole like a pigsty. Crang lay at the end of the chain, next to a lousy Basuto horse-thief. You don't believe it? But it's true! This actually happened under the Boer Government of the Free State in the 'sixties!

"Well, my heart fairly bled for the poor devil, and when

I'd plucked up my last ounce of courage, I managed to ask him what he was in for.

" 'Son,' he said, 'it's manslaughter; but I swear to God I'm as innocent as a lamb!' To tell you the truth, I'd much rather it had been murder, and Crang guilty; but it seemed that he was merely serving a sentence of five years in chains. 'Five years,' he said, 'and only six months gone!' He told me that he'd have committed suicide long ago if he'd had the chance. He would have drowned himself in father's dam. The trouble was that he could swim like a fish, and couldn't sink if he tried. 'I'd have done it at night,' he said, 'but what can you do when you're chained to a dirty Basuto? You couldn't bleed to death without waking him, and I haven't got a knife. Now what would you do, son?'

"I took it very seriously, but I'm hanged if I could tell him. What I wanted to be getting at was the story of his crime, and so I begged him to tell me. 'Understand, first of all, that I'm innocent,' he said. And I told him I believed him. It was a long yarn. He had deserted his ship at Port Elizabeth, as lots of men did in those early days of the diamonds, and had been tramping to Kimberley. On the way he put up for the night at a Jew store somewhere near Bethulie, and got blind drunk. That same night some Kaffirs broke into the store, killed the Jew, and left Crang asleep. Next day Crang woke to discover the murder. He was still fuddled, but clear enough to make his way to the next farm and to report the crime. The farmer was one of the Landdrost's court, and Crang, instead of being thanked, found himself arrested. Everything was against him. The Kaffirs gave evidence. They had heard sounds of a struggle in the night. And here was a desperate character, an Englishman, tramping to the diamond fields with a fair sum of money in his pocket, and he too drunk to know what he had done. It was lucky that they didn't make it murder. Five years in chains, and not a friend in the country! 'If it wasn't for the chains,' he said, ' I could bear it.'

"Now if there's one thing that appeals to a boy it's a sense of justice. I believed the chap. He'd cried like a

child when he told me, and I cried with him. That night I had it out with my father; told him the whole story as Crang had given it to me. First I got a good hiding for having talked to him; then my father said he'd see about it. And he did. I knew he would, and kept quiet waiting to hear what he'd say. That week I only saw Crang for a second. 'I've told my dad about you,' I said. 'God bless you,' says he, 'that was the luckiest nest that ever I took.'

"Next day my father called me up to him. 'Charlie,' he said, 'I've been looking into the matter of that man Crang. I've had his papers from the court at Bloemfontein, and it's just possible he may have told you the truth. It seems that he went straight up to old Rensburg and put the case to him. Then he got him to ride along with him to the *tronk*. They saw Crang together, heard his story, and talked it over. My father pointed out to Rensburg that Crang was the only white man in the place, and that it wasn't fair to chain him up to a Kaffir and let him be knocked about by a black guard. Rensburg saw the force of this, particularly when my father told him that this was the way to make the Kaffirs get above themselves. So they came to an agreement. My father made himself responsible for Crang. Crang swore on his honor that he wouldn't try to escape if he had his chains knocked off and was allowed to sleep in a pigsty of his own. And next time that they came to the dam I saw Crang without his chains.

"He just caught a moment to thank me. 'Charlie,' he said, 'I'll never forget you as long as I live. I tell you, it's heaven!' Well, if the *tronk* at Smitsdorp was heaven, it must have been pretty hellish before.

"And so it went on. Every Saturday we met and had a yarn; sometimes it was just a whisper. By that time I'd decided that I was going to be a sailor myself! Great times we had. . . . Sometimes he'd talk about his life in the *tronk;* sometimes we didn't mention it; but all the time I knew that he was having a pretty rough passage with the guard, who could knock him about even though he wasn't chained. But Crang was a plucky fellow, and never grumbled. He'd had more than one chance of escape,

and would have taken it like a bird if he hadn't given his word to my father. He told me so, quite frankly. You couldn't help admiring the chap, and so I used to do everything that I could do for him: slipping a bit of meat off my plate at dinner-time, or pinching a few inches of tobacco and an old pipe of my father's. So two years passed. . . .

"Then we had a nasty knock. My father died. You'd never have thought it of a great strong chap like that; but the winters in the Free State are worse than anything you get up here. He got pneumonia, and wouldn't lie in. He had a case on, and his client depended on him. It was the worst thing I remember in my life; but it made a man of me. I was fifteen and the only son. We had only the farm to live by, and I had to take on the whole weight of it. You see, I was a big chap for my age. What's more, my father had made good friends, so that if it came to sales some of them would give a lift to my stuffs, or let me in easy if I wanted to buy. It turned my head a bit, I don't mind telling you; but I worked like a horse for all that. I never saw Crang for weeks on end. I'd no time for listening to stories, and when Saturday came round that the convicts marched up to bathe as usual I might be twenty miles away.

"One afternoon I came across him in the same old orchard, and the sight of him gave me a shock. The man had fallen away to nothing. His nose was like a bird's beak, and his eyes sunk in his head. 'Well, Charlie,' he says, 'so you've forgotten me.' I flushed up properly. I hadn't exactly forgotten him, but I hadn't taken any trouble to see him. He came up closer, and I saw that one eye and all that side of his temple were black with a bruise. 'What have you been up to?' I said. 'It's that blasted Zulu,' says he. 'He's got a down on me, and so have all the other niggers in the *tronk*. It's no good; it's one against twenty-three, and your poor dad's dead and gone. I'm worse off now than ever I was.'

"Then he came right up to me. 'Look here, Charlie,' he said, 'I gave your dad a promise. I've kept it. That's true, ban't it?' 'Certainly you've kept it,' I said. 'And now he's dead and gone,' he went on, 'that promise is still there. I don't want to put a slur on his memory.

But this I tell you straight. I'm done. I can't go on!' I didn't need telling that, I could see that the chap was done. 'It's this way,' he said. 'I reckon you've come into your father's promise. If you want to bind me to it, I'm bound. But if you release me from it, I'm off. I think I see my way to it.'

"I could say nothing. 'I'll ask my mother,' I said. 'Now, for God's sake,' says he, 'don't go and drag a woman into it! Just tell me this: am I free of my word? Will you give it back to me?' Well, what could I do?

" 'Yes,' I said, 'as far as I'm concerned you're free.'

" 'Thank God you're a sportsman, Charlie,' he said. He gave me a good old handshake. 'And now there's one thing more. Will you help me?'

"Well, that was a question I didn't wait to answer. A lad of fifteen does not think much about laws or things of that sort. I said 'Yes' at once, and asked him what he wanted me to do. 'Not much,' he said. 'I want you to give me a rough chart of the country and tell me a place where I can lie quiet for the night. Then I want you to put me up some food and a suit of your dad's clothes. That's all.'

"So we had a talk about the lie of the land and the course of the Caledon River. His idea, you see, was to get out of the Free State as quickly as possible, and the river was the boundary between it and the Cape Colony. We decided that he might spend the night in a poplar thicket at the top of our valley, four or five miles above the dam. There used to be a Boer farm there, but they just went north with their wagons, like they do, and left the place to go to waste. Above the dam the hillside rises pretty steeply—it's almost a cliff—and we settled that next Saturday I should hide the clothes, with a loaf of bread and some *biltong,* at the top of it. 'Leave the rest to me,' said Crang; and at this the Zulu blackguard came up and we said no more.

"That next Saturday was the most exciting day of my life up to date. It was a blazing hot morning. I hid the clothes and the food at the top of the cliffs as we'd arranged, and then I waited in the bushes on the other

side to see what would happen. The afternoon was a scorcher too. The convicts came up and did their bit of work. Then the two guards marched them down to the dam. They began to strip for bathing. And I lay there watching Crang. You've got to remember that he was the only man without chains.

"He didn't seem in any hurry to bathe. I saw him at a distance, slinking round the edge of the dam like a dog that's got scent of something, and looking out of the corner of his eye at the Zulu who had the gun. It was the best play that ever I saw! When the other guard saw the prisoners in the water he couldn't resist it. He stripped naked, and went and lay in it, and the Zulu watched him. He was stretched out on the ground with his rifle on a rock a yard or two away. I saw old Crang hovering over that rifle like a hawk; but the Zulu had half an eye on it too, and there was nothing doing. It was a queer thing—you could see that nigger thinking of the cool water as he lay there in the heat. I kept on saying to myself: 'Why don't you get in, you swine?' It almost seemed as if by thinking of it you could make him do it. Know what I mean? Poor old Crang must have been thinking just the same as myself. . . .

"Then suddenly the Zulu got up on his haunches and began to pull at his coat. 'It's coming,' I thought. 'By gad, it's coming!' Crang came a bit nearer, and the guard asked him why he hadn't washed according to orders. Crang slunk off again. I couldn't hear what he said. The Zulu began to rub his naked chest with his nails, like a great monkey scratching. Then he got up, and went to the edge of the water.

"It all came in a second. As soon as his back was turned Crang was on that rifle. The Zulu swung round. 'It's murder,' I thought, 'and if it is, I'm in it. Crang's a white man.' But there was no need for that. Crang swung the rifle in the air and brought it down on a rock, splintering the butt to pieces. That was his plan. All that he feared was that rifle. Otherwise he knew they couldn't catch him. He was off like a flash, and the Zulu after him. Up the hillside, over the rocks—I've never seen a man

climb like that in my life, and the Zulu wasn't far behind him. It was a pretty even match, for poor old Crang was weak with want of food. At the top of the *kranz* the Zulu was gaining. Crang stopped and picked up a big rock. He heaved it over his head. 'You black swine,' he shouted, 'if you move another yard I'll dash your dirty brains out!' He could have done it, and the Zulu knew. He stopped, and Crang went on up the mountain like a damn rock-rabbit. And there was I, forgetting that I was supposed not to be there, standing up above the bushes shouting, 'Go it—go it!' at the top of my voice!

"I went home that evening more excited than I can tell you. I wanted to take some one into my confidence, but there was nobody but my mother, and I was scared of her. She was too good. Next morning at daybreak I rode up to the place I'd hidden the clothes. They were gone. 'Well, that's over,' I thought, 'I've finished with Crang for life.'

"Of course you know the proper end of this story. Crang ought to have died a millionaire and left me his fortune. Well, he didn't, or you may bet your soul I shouldn't be here this night. For a year or two I often thought of him; and then he went right out of my mind. A good deal happened in those years.

We sold the house and farm at Smitsdorp. After my father died there was no point in living so near the town. We moved to a new place sixteen miles away from the dorp. When I was eighteen I fell in love with my first; and that's quite enough to keep a man's mind busy.

"One evening—I can't even tell you the year—I was ploughing. None of your tractors in those days! I'd sent the niggers off to the compound, and went on ploughing myself right up to sunset. I wanted to finish a big patch for the mealies, and as I ploughed I was thinking of Bessie so that I hardly knew what I was doing. I went round and round that field so that by sunset there was only a narrow strip to finish. 'Well,' I thought, 'I may as well get it done while I'm about it.' There was a moon, you see. So I gave old Scotland a flick with the whip and told

him he'd for to finish it. You could talk to that ox like you'd talk to a dog.

"All through that last half-hour I saw that there was a fellow watching me on the edge of the ploughland. I noticed him specially because you might go for six months without seeing a stranger on our new farm. I wondered what he wanted, though I'd no intention of stopping my work to ask him. When I'd finished I left the plough where it was and started driving the span of oxen home; and then he came to meet me: a little chap, dressed all in black, like a shopkeeper, with a bilcock hat on his head and a little black bag in his hand. He came up to me and took off his hat. I guessed he wanted to sell something and was ready to turn him off. 'Is this Mr. Charles Murray?' he says. 'That's my name,' says I. 'Well, you've grown away all right!' he said.

"I laughed. 'And who might you be?' I asked.

" 'Don't you remember me?' says he. 'No, I don't,' said I. Then he stripped off his coat and rolled up his sleeves, holding out his arm. I thought the chap was mad. 'Take a look at this,' he said. Then I saw it was tattooed with a great dragon. 'By God,' says I, 'it's Crang!' 'Crang it is!' said he. 'I thought you'd remember me, son.' I took him by the arm. 'You'd better come along to the house and have some supper,' said I. 'No, son,' says he, 'I daren't do it. This is the Free State, and there's a warrant still out against me. But I'd like to have a yarn all the same.'

"So I left the oxen to graze, and we two sat down on the veld and talked in the moonlight. It was a queer story he told me. After he got clear of the guard on that Saturday afternoon he had gone to the poplar grove where we'd settled he should hide. In the middle of the night he'd come back for the food and the suit of clothes. And then he had a stroke of bad luck. I told you that the stuff was hidden at the top of a cliff? Well, in the dark poor old Crang missed his footing, fell twenty feet and smashed his arm. A fine old business for a man as weak as he was! But he stuck to it, and he got his clothes, and the next night he struggled across country somehow or

other to the Caledon River. And there he had another bit of bad luck. The river was in flood, and he had to swim it, broken arm and all. He must have been pretty near dead when he reached the other side.

"And here comes the funny part of the business. He had to get his arm mended somehow or other; there was no hospital nearer than Aliwal North; and, if you'll believe it, the only hospital there was the jail! Out of one jail and into another! I tell you we had a good laugh over it. But that jail was a British one, and heaven after Smitsdorp. They looked after him finely for a couple of months and turned him out cured.

"Then he went down to Port Elizabeth and got work of some sort. He saved a bit of money—Smitsdorp had cured him of the drink for life—and set up in a coal and wood business on his own. He must have made a pretty good thing of it; money was easier to make in those days; but the man could never get the diamond fields out of his mind. So just before I saw him, he'd sold up his business and trekked off again, going this time by the coach that used to run from Port Elizabeth to Kimberley. That coach passed through Smitsdorp; and when he saw the old *tronk* on the side of the hill, he had remembered me and felt it his duty to let me know he was alive, and to thank me. That shows you he was a good sort; for, as he said, the warrant was still out against him. He went to the hotel in Smitsdorp, and there he found out that we'd left the place. But that didn't stop him. He walked a good sixteen miles over the veld to find me, and did it, as I've told you.

"I asked him if I could help him with money; but he opened his black bag and showed me that it was crammed with bank-notes and gold. 'I'm a rich man,' he said, 'and in Kimberley I shall double it.' I shook my head, but there was no stopping him. 'It's a fine moonlight night,' he said, 'and I'd better be getting on my way.'

"So he shook hands. 'You'll see me again, son, never fear,' he said. 'I'll write to you from Kimberley.' It was a funny thing to see that little chap, with his black bag, moving off into the dusk. When I was just losing sight

of him he turned and waved to me. I've never liked any man better in my life.

"That was the last of him, and the last I heard. He never wrote to me from Kimberley. Perhaps he lost all his money and was ashamed. Perhaps—I don't know—at that time the Kimberley diggings were about the most unhealthy place on earth. They used to get a kind of malaria or typhus—they called it 'Diggings Fever'—and men died there like flies. I expect that was what happened to poor old Crang. Well, he'd had a good run for his money; he'd thanked me for the little help I gave him, and he'd got to Kimberley. He'd always told me that his chief ambition was to find a rough diamond, and that's just about the best name you could give him. I reckon we'll have another pipe and turn in. . . ."

IRISH SUPPLEMENT

THE RAPPAREE[1]

By "LYNN DOYLE"

(From *The Irish Statesman*)

THE little body of soldiers moved in line over the vast desolation of the Bog of Allen, a slender ribbon of scarlet on the grey waste. As they passed along they beat each bush and tussock of grass, and scrutinised each bog and stream with a savage earnestness that seemed to spring more from personal hate than from mere devotion to duty.

The guerilla warfare that succeeded the Boyne and Limerick had fanned to cruelty the passions of the contending races; and the Bog of Allen had become the theatre of a long succession of sordid tragedies. Between the regular troops of both armies some show of military courtesy was still observed; but between the Rapparees and the Williamite forces the struggle had degenerated into mere savagery.

And so the soldier of this little company as he drove his bayonet home through a bush or hummock had perhaps before his mind's eye the mutilated body of the comrade who had marched by his side but yesterday.

Presently, on the extreme right of the line, an outcry arose. The quartermaster hurried towards the sound. He found a knot of soldiers gathered by the side of a sluggish, sedge-covered stream.

"What is it, men?" he said.

"A Rapparee, sir," answered one of the soldiers. "I tell you it was," he said excitedly to his comrades. "I seen him. Here;—he disappeared just here where we're standing." He peered eagerly into the stream, then suddenly threw himself on his face and plunged his arm into the water.

[1] Copyright, 1925, by "Lynn Doyle."

"Here's his musket," he said, struggling upright. He handed the quartermaster a gun-barrel, plugged at the muzzle with an oiled cloth, and at the touch-hole with a quill.

"Yes, this is fresh," said the quartermaster, pulling out the plug. He uttered a hoarse shout to the halted line, which streamed in at the double.

"A Rapparee, boys," he cried. "Scatter—search the stream!" He ran up and down the bank, eager as a blood-hound. "Here, boys," he shouted suddenly, stooping over the water—"quick. By G——d, I have him!"

One or two of the men ran up and looked over the quartermaster's shoulder. The Rapparee lay in the shallow water close along the bank. From the pale face which alone appeared above the weedy stream his dark eyes looked up in sick fascination at the exulting faces of his captors.

The soldier on the quartermaster's right raised his musket. But the quartermaster beat the bayonet-thrust aside with his sword.

"Easy, Jones," he said sternly; "we'll not dirty clean steel on the rogue. Have him out on the bank. There's a stout bush yonder will do his business."

The Rapparee was quickly dragged out of the stream, and stood shivering in the bitter wind, a meagre, famine-stricken object, his piteous shanks wrapped with straw ropes, his bare ribs gleaming through the rents in the tattered greatcoat, his only garment. Beneath the matted hair that dripped over his face the wild eyes darted here and there in agonized enquiry.

He was not long in doubt.

"The rope there, Dickson," said the quartermaster. "Corporal Knox, you will take a couple of men and settle with this fellow. Jones, enter up a Rapparee hanged at—never mind the place. Hurry, boys; there's snow coming."

The sight of the rope brought dreadful certainty to the prisoner. He threw himself at the quartermaster's feet and clasped his legs. A frenzied torrent of entreaty poured from his lips.

"Away with the swine," said the quartermaster, pushing

him off contemptuously with his foot. "How does he expect me to understand his cursed lingo?"

Two of the soldiers seized the Rapparee; but he tore himself from their grip, leaving half his tattered garment behind, and again threw himself on the ground before the quartermaster.

"Money," he gasped painfully, "hide money—much money."

"What's that?" said the quartermaster sharply.

The ring of soldiers narrowed.

"Money," cried the Rapparee, "much money." A light of hope dawned in his eyes. He sprang to his feet and began eagerly to drag the quartermaster towards a clump of bushes a little distance away.

"Money—give money—no hang," he said, and peered up piteously in the quartermaster's face.

"What does the rascal mean, Jones?" said the quartermaster.

"He's got treasure hidden, sir," answered the man, "and wants to buy off his life. I'd take the stuff, sir. You can hang the beggar afterwards. It's sure to be plunder."

The quartermaster hesitated. The faces of his men seemed to speak agreement with Jones. The Rapparee hung dumbly on his looks.

"We'll have a look at his money, anyway," said he; and signed to his prisoner to lead the way.

The creature uttered a yell of joy, sprang in the air, clapping his hands, and was about to dart off when two of the men seized him.

"That's right," said the quartermaster, "watch the treacherous dog. March ahead with him, Knox and Dickson. Spread, boys, and look to your priming. This may be an ambush."

The prisoner led the way to a patch of higher ground covered with thick grass, and sheltered by a semi-circle of low bushes. He crept under the branches of one of these and began to ferret among the earth and stones.

The quartermaster bent over him eagerly. His men closed round with sparkling eyes, all thought of an ambush forgotten.

The Rapparee emerged from beneath the bush, a dirty cloth in his hand. His eyes shone with simple delight as he handed the rag to the quartermaster.

"Money," he said, smiling ingratiatingly in his face. "Much money. No hang."

The quartermaster untied the knots hastily. The soldiers crowded closer, and craned their necks to see. At last the cloth fell open in his fumbling hands, and the treasure lay revealed. There were four half-crowns and three shillings in King James's brass money.

For a moment the soldiers looked at the little heap in silence. Then an outburst of laughter shook the whole group. They rocked back and forth, and laid hold of one another as they laughed.

The Rapparee looked at the circle of grinning faces in bewilderment, and smiled uncertainly. It seemed as if amid the laughter he detected a sinister note.

"Much money," he said to the quartermaster, with a re-birth of anxiety in his voice; "much money—no hang?"

The quartermaster had not laughed.

"Here, Corporal," he said, "finish him off. I might have known it was only one of their tricks. Stop his cursed skirling, can't you! Fall in, men, and be ready to start."

"There might be more coin about, sir," said the man Jones.

"What's that?" said the quartermaster. "Gad, so there might. Fetch the rogue back."

"More money?" he demanded sternly of the shaking wretch. "More money?" and he pointed to the bushes.

The Rapparee seemed to have abandoned hope. "No money," he said dully "all give—all give," he repeated, looking in amazed distress from the little treasure to the quartermaster's face. "No hang," he burst out suddenly, trying to fall on his knees—"no hang!"

"I don't believe the dog, boys," cried the quartermaster sharply. "Do you see him looking at the bushes? Search all round, and I'll watch his face. That's right; along there. You're warm! you're warm! Look at the rogue's countenance. In there, boys. Hold the fellow back, Dickson!—Have you got anything?

A shout came from the nearest group.

"Here's something, sir—something wrapped up in straw."

"Ha!" cried the quartermaster, hurrying forward. "We've found the fox's real den at last. Pull it out, whatever it is."

The men disinterred a considerable, straw-wrapped bundle, and carried it into the open.

"Good dogs," said the quartermaster, rubbing his hands; "good dogs. You've nosed out something worth our while. Hurry up till we see what it is."

They tore the bundle open. There fell out a confused mass of half-gnawed bones, potatoes, pieces of cheese-rind, and hunks of bread.

"Swounds," said the quartermaster, after the first pause of chagrin. "What was the fellow looking so plaguey anxious about? Pull all the stuff to pieces. There may be something hidden in it. And search the bushes further."

The soldiers tore at the fragments in greedy haste; ground the bread to crumbs and burst the potatoes under their heels in a fury of disappointment.

The Rapparee threw himself beneath their feet with wild screams. He hung round their legs in a frenzy of supplication; he wept; he tore his matted hair; he grovelled before them; he threw himself upon the miserable relics of food, and tried to shield them with his body.

"No, no," he shrieked in an abandonment of anguish; "no, no!"

"Drag him off," said the quartermaster, motioning to two of his men. "There's something here." He fell on his knees and groped eagerly among the straw. But his search was unrewarded. A few fragments of crust fell out, nothing more. He looked up in the faces of his men in bewilderment.

"D——n me if I can make the creature out," he said, rising to his feet. "Listen to the screeches of him. I'll be cursed if he isn't crying over his supper, and him going to be hanged in five minutes. We needn't waste more time over an idiot like that. Have another look round and we'll be off.—Hullo! What's Tomkins got?"

A man came up with an armful of sticks and straw, and a flint and steel.

"No good, sir," he said, "only firing."

"Strike up a blaze," said the quartermaster, "it'll warm us up before we start. Just another look round, boys, while the fire's lighting."

But the preparations for making the fire roused the doomed wretch to a last paroxysm of distress. He struggled wildly in his captors' arms. He wrenched his mouth free and uttered wail upon wail, high, quivering, despairing. His wild eyes darted from one to another in more than mortal agony.

"No, no," he screamed piercingly, and struggled vainly to reach the quartermaster,—"no, no!"

"Now he's howling for his fire," said the quartermaster. "He needn't. He'll have plenty of fire in a minute or two." He laughed brutally. "If I'd known he was only wasting our time he'd have been warming himself at it half an hour ago."

The straw roared out in a flapping standard of flame, and poured a torrent of flakes before the rising wind.

At the sight of the blaze, the Rapparee's screams died into silence. His struggles ceased. His guards released his arms a little; and he sank to the ground and crouched there, rocking to and fro. The moan of his keening rose and fell in a desolation of hopeless sorrow. Even his captors' hearts were wrung by the sound.

"Come, Corporal," said the quartermaster, "off with you. Here are the men coming back. They've found nothing. Put the poor devil out of his misery."

The Corporal and his men disappeared with their victim. The soldiers crouched round the dying flame, and strove to drive out the chill of the falling night. A little dusty snow fell, puffed here and there along the frozen ground, and hissed on the embers. Presently the fall thickened, and quenched the last vestiges of fire.

The keen of the doomed Rapparee rose and fell, and mingled eerily with the soughing wind.

The shivering circle of men listened in gloomy silence.

Then the keening ceased. The quartermaster rose to his feet stiffly.

"Now, boys," he said; "fall in. Here's the Corporal. We must step out. God send we don't miss our way this dreadful night.—Are you ready? Quick march, then."

The little band moved off, winding in and out among the frozen pools and quagmires.

One of the rear rank men turned his head for a moment to look at the spot they had just quitted. But it was no longer visible. The tall columns of snow followed one another in dreary procession across the darkening waste.

Suddenly the soldier gripped his neighbour's arm.

"Dick," he said, under his breath, "Dick—do you see anything? There—behind us—moving."

The man looked a moment, then turned to his comrade with whitening face.

"It's a woman and four little children," he said. "God forgive us all."

SAMHAIN[1]

By DOROTHY MACARDLE

(From *The Dublin Magazine*)

IT was only on rare and premeditated occasions that the studio was visited by Una's old friend Andrew FitzGerald. He had been burrowing through his great work on Celtic etymology for so many years that "by the law of inertia," he said, he could not stop. But once or twice in a season he would emerge, blinking, into the light and visit his young friends. He came one April evening to meet Doctor Christiansen, the Norwegian folklorist, and he was as happy as a leprechaun talking of trolls and pooka and the Sidhe and Norse monuments in Ireland and the ship symbol in Brugh-na-Boinne.

Doctor Christiansen had been exploring the Gaeltacht and was full of delight in the people he had met.

"What is to me most charming," he said, "is their good friendship with their dead. I hoped much to meet a revenant, or a woman of the Sidhe—but alas, to a Norseman, she would not appear!"

Una looked at him reproachfully. "You are laughing at us," she said.

"Indeed no!" he replied quickly. "I have learned so much, I no longer venture to disbelieve. To me, magics and religions all are one, and all very full with what is true. And those people—they speak in good faith. It was in Kerry, more than anywhere in the world," he went on, "that poor, beautiful country, that they told me mysteries of the dead."

"Still, you thought the people credulous," FitzGerald said gently; "but you will not suspect a lexicographer of being

[1] Copyright, 1924, by The Harrigan Press.
From "Earth-Bound," published by The Harrigan Press.

fantastical. I, too, could tell you of strange happenings in Kerry—a mystery of the dead."

"Daddy Fitz!" Frank exclaimed, "how well you never told us you had seen a ghost!"

"But I saw no ghost, Avic," he replied, his crumpled old face sweet with a reminiscent smile. "If I had seen him, I think, truly, I should now be far away. I will tell you, if you like, what I heard."

"If you please!" begged Dr. Christiansen eagerly.

"Please!" said Una. "Was it long ago?"

"Long ago indeed—when I was young. I was learning Irish at that time and I went to live in a small fishing village in West Kerry where the people had the language still—and had very little else.

"I made the best friend of my life there; 'twas Father Patrick O'Rahilly, the parish priest, a middle-aged man, but white-haired, very delicate—the nearest creature to a saint I have ever known.

"No life could be more lonely, I suppose, than that of an Irish priest in those desert regions of the west and south. This man had been a student and traveler in his youth—he had a very subtle, originating mind—and there he was, marooned among the poorest fisher-folk in existence —too poor himself to buy books. My coming, heretic though he found me—I was a sort of agnostic then—was a godsend to him; he made no secret of it from the first, and I was as welcome to the presbytery as if it had been my home.

"I rejoiced in the man and in his queer, desultory house; there was charm, life about it, though 'twas not old. It had been built a generation ago by a Father Howe. He had chosen the site for the sake of the grand view. Over Dingle Bay, you looked, through a gap in the trees, across to the mountains—mountains like mother-o'-pearl. To secure that, he did what the folk said was a wrongful thing; he built on an old pathway that ran from the chapel to the ancient graveyard on the hill. That path had been disused altogether since the opening of the military road. He harmed no living soul, building on it; moreover he lived jovially, and died piously in his bed; all

the same the people never gave up blaming his choice. ' 'Twas bad,' they said, 'to go meddling with an old path; there's them might be wishful to be using it still.'

"There was one old woman who used to beg Father Patrick with tears in her eyes every time she met him, to take a house somewhere else. I remember the day his patience gave out.

" 'Maura O'Shea,' he said sternly, 'are you suggesting that a priest of God has cause to dread the vengeance of the living or of the dead?'

"And, 'Ah, Father Patrick, dear,' she replied in distress, 'don't you know we'd stay out of Heaven itself, and Saint Peter bidding us step in, to do a good turn to you, alive or dead?'

"They are the people who know how to love and to speak out of the heart as well as out of the mind.

"My coming brought the bad luck, so it seemed. All that summer and autumn one disaster after another broke on those unfortunate people, until, towards Samhain time, the last blow came—Father Patrick fell ill."

"Sah-wen?" Max repeated enquiringly. His tongue tangled always over Irish words. Dr. Christiansen looked up, smiling:

"Your Festival of the Dead?"

"It corresponds, doesn't it, to the Feast of Balor?" FitzGerald went on: "Mananaan, the god of the underworld, was potent then and it is a time of strange happenings in Gaelic countries still. It is then, in Ireland, that the living pray for the dead, invoking the prayers of the holy saints; it is then, old people will tell you, that the drowned come up out of the sea—they come to draw away living souls; there are footfalls you must not follow, knocking to which you dare not open; dead voices call . . .

"The trouble began about July; 'twas the wettest July Corney O'Grady remembered, and he was ninety-five years old.

"August was a month of storm; day after day passed and the little boats dared not venture out, while the pirating French trawlers, hardier vessels, came plundering the spawn-beds—destroying the harvest of the sea. The farms,

no more than potato patches among the stones, which were the fisher-folks' last resource, failed them, too; the potatoes came black and rotten from the summer rains.

"It was one of those seasons of heart-breaking tragedy which are recurrent on those Irish coasts where the people dwell in the valley of the shadow all their lives. By the end of summer the spectre of famine had come.

"I think that but for Father Patrick many of those poor souls would have boarded up their windows, as in the old days, and lain down in their bare huts to die; but he was with them like an inspired and inspiring spirit, giving them courage, energy and hope. He got an instructress from Cork to start a knitting industry and the girls worked hard, but they could get no price for the garments they made. And all the time the sky was pitiless. 'You'd think,' old Corney said bitterly, 'God grudged Ireland the light of the sun.'

"The men began to get desperate. They saw the children growing wizened and sickly before their eyes. They were without milk, without flour, without even Indian meal. I don't think they cried or complained, the children, but they had not the strength to climb the steep road to the school. You'd see them creeping among the potato ridges, turning over the sods, in the hope that a good potato might remain.

"The men took to going out in any weather at all—going twenty miles out to sea in their canoes, and they'd come home without having netted a fish. Many a time, at the pleading of a distracted wife or mother, Father Patrick went down to them to protest, but even he could not hold them now. 'Sure, Father,' they would answer, 'there is death only before us anyway, and isn't it better go look for it on the water than bide waiting it on the black land? What good are we to the childer, and we walking the roads.'

"The best boat in the village was owned by a grand old fellow named MacCarthy, his two sons and his son-in-law, Dermot Roche. There was a tribe of young children dependent on this crew, and I watched the demons of

misery give place to the demons of recklessness in the sombre eyes of the men.

"I troubled most about Dermot. The man attracted me strongly and had taken me under his protection from the first. He was a creature of fierce attachments; he loved me, I think, for my love of the Irish; he never let a word of English across his tongue. To my imagination he incarnated the spirit of that savage, primitive, gentle place; hard and gaunt he was as the rocks, protective as the hills; he seemed to know its terrible history 'in his bones.' I never saw him smile, but I have seen him glow with a kind of angry joy. He used to take me out fishing in the early morning to teach me the old ranns and proverbs that he knew I loved, and he would sing to me on the water wild old traditional songs in a rich voice that had a drone in it like the wind. He had a shy, smiling little wife, and half-a-dozen black-haired youngsters who seemed to live like sea-creatures among the rocks. Father Patrick had been good to the children, and for Father Patrick, Dermot would have faced the legions of Hell. In those famine days the man's face became terrible; his wife was expecting another child.

"I was sitting at the round table in the presbytery, that black September evening, reading with Father Patrick the ancient annals which were his delight and mine, when Dermot unlatched the door and came striding in—a man angry with his God. Father Patrick's gentle welcome was too much for him; he sat down and laid his head on the table and wept. Annie had given birth to a seventh child and died.

"Father Patrick asked me to stay in the house in case any call should come, and went down with Dermot. He came back in the morning worn out, his habitual tranquillity gone.

" 'The men are losing hold of themselves,' he said, ' 'Tis not right. Dermot's left the neighbours to wake Annie, and gone off with MacCarthy in the boat.'

"All that day a diabolical gale was raging. The boat did not come home. By dusk the people were huddling together, silent and ghastly, at the little pier; as long as

daylight lasted there was nothing visible but the grey, murderous sea. At dawn they launched the life-boat and it came back at noon. Mat Kearney climbed out of it and passed up through the crowd. He answered me with a heavy gesture of his hand: 'They're all away.' His own son was in it—one of the crew of eight. They had found the boat upside down.

"If Father Patrick had laboured before, he laboured after this like forty men; day and night, in wind and wet, he was in and out of the broken hovels, bringing what comfort there was to bring to forlorn old mothers and derelict young widows and starving families that had no man.

"I sent an appeal to the Dublin press and to friends in Boston which brought us enough to keep Dermot's orphans and the MacCarthys for a few weeks; after that, neighbours who had forgotten what it was not to be hungry took the children to their own homes.

"Our language studies were all laid aside. When Father Patrick was not visiting he would be brooding and writing and calculating, trying to work out schemes. He knew little of the commercial world and I thought most of his suggestions impracticable; but one seemed sound. He began corresponding with traders in Cork and Dublin, trying to work up a market for carrigeen moss—a kind of edible seaweed which grows in the rock pools and can be gathered at low tide. He hoped to have a sale for it very soon. It could never, of course, bring in much to the poor creatures, but the work and planning kept them from black despair.

But all the time Father Patrick was struggling against illness, himself obsessed by a fear of breaking down. His people had no one else.

"Then, near and far along the coast, washed up by the tide, the bodies of the drowned fishermen came in. One by one we laid them with the multitude of their fathers, seafaring generations, in the wind-swept graveyard beyond the house. And from each burial Father Patrick came home bowed as though under another load of care. Grief weakened him no less than the endless toil. I would have

given all I had to take him away from it, to the South.

"It was on the evening we buried Dermot that the sickness came. I found him huddled in the chair in his parlour, unable to speak or move. His old housekeeper and I helped him upstairs and put him to bed and carried the red sods up to his room.

"The doctor had to ride out to us over Brandon Mountain. It was that dreaded scourge of the poor, typhoid; a desperate attack. Every day for a week he came, and he and Brigid and I were fighting avenging nature for that dear life. On the last day of October he told me there was no more hope and that I should send for the priest. I went down the village street with him, looking for a boy to ride out with the message; the men were at the street corners, the women at their doors, waiting, dumbly, for the doctor's word. 'Pray for him; pray for him!' was all he said. I heard men sobbing as they turned away.

"Late in the evening the young priest came and gave the Viaticum to my dying friend. When he had gone and I went in to Father Patrick I found him lying very quiet with a happy radiance on his face. He held out his hand for mine. 'Stay by me tonight, Andreas,' he whispered. ' 'Twould be good to have you near when I set out.'

"You can imagine I felt desolate enough. For months this man had made the whole kindness of my world; I knew I'd never see his like again. And I had no resource. Bitterly I envied the good Catholic people with their boundless faith in prayer. They were praying for him that night, I knew well, in every cottage, and invoking prayers more powerful than their own—All Saints'—All Souls'.

"When I drew the curtains and lit the lamp at nightfall he asked was it Samhain night. 'It is,' I answered, and he sighed distressfully: 'I ought to be praying for the dead.'

"There was a little oratory behind the bedroom where he used sometimes to say Mass. 'Would you light the altar candles for me, Andreas?' he said. 'The way they'll know I didn't forget . . .'

"I lit a candle and walking down the draughty passage, opened the oratory door. It was a bare little room with

no adornment; there were only a few benches and the altar with its tabernacle, four brass candlesticks and white cloth, but it was full, to my imagination, of rest. I lit the candles and then, surrendering to a sudden whim, it may be of faith, I prayed. I suppose it was a pagan sort of prayer.

"When I went back to Father Patrick his eyes were closed and his breathing was so faint that I thought he had died, until I saw his fingers move feebly along his rosary beads.

"There was nothing that I could do but sit in the old chair by the fire putting fresh sods on from time to time, giving him a drink when I saw that he was awake. About midnight he began moaning; his face had grown grey and wan, and his fingers were groping about the quilt. I could see that he was in high fever. 'What will they do at all?' he kept murmuring unhappily, and 'I ought to be praying for the dead . . .' Then: 'Pray that I'll be spared to them awhile, Andreas'; and again, moaning: 'God pity him, he can't pray!'

"I knew that he could scarcely live till dawn.

"Then the trance-like silence fell again, broken only by the long wailing gusts of a wind that seemed to blow out of infinity and into infinity again, like a human soul.

"We forget, thank God, those intensities of desolation. I only know that the sense of Eternity, always appalling, fell on me in that quiet room—and to me, Eternity was a void. The weak, insane moment in which I had prayed was over . . . the bright flame that had been my friend's spirit was going out . . . after life there was only the Abyss . . . and I could not hold him back; I knew no way . . .

"It was an hour or two after midnight, I suppose, when I roused myself and drank some black coffee and went over to my patient to see whether he slept.

"He was awake; his eyes were open; he was listening—listening to something which I did not hear. He did not look up at me or speak or move.

"I stood, wondering, beside the bed, and presently a sound came to my ears—faintly—a low, rhythmic murmur,

like a multitude of voices at prayer. I listened and gradually I heard clearly, much more clearly—a soothing and entrancing sound. It came from the room behind the bedroom—the oratory. I leaned, listening, against the wall. It was prayer; I heard the prayers and responses—but not in Latin—it was Irish—I knew the soft, rich sounds.

"I suppose the language was my only passion—maybe I loved it better, even, than my friend; anyhow, in the mere joy and wonder of hearing it I became oblivious of everything else. Soon every syllable came to me, full and clear; I heard a long unfamiliar litany, full of noble phrases and ancient names—'Naov Finghin . . . Naov Breandan . . . Naov Colmcille . . .' and, after the litany, prayers, long and ceremonious—the whole Mass.

"While it lasted I stood spellbound, but when silence came I felt shaken with awful fear; I knelt down, suddenly, by the bed and stared at Father Patrick's face. His eyes were wide open; his lips were moving in quiet prayer; the flush of fever had gone; he seemed to have forgotten me; he said 'Amen!'

"From the oratory too, I heard a long 'Amen,' like a contented sigh. I heard the sound of people rising from their knees, and their footsteps, soft and light, as of an innumerable multitude, went past the door. I heard them after a moment on the gravel outside, and low voices began caoining mournfully until a man's voice called quietly, 'Na bi ag caoineadh anois'—'Do not be caoining now!' That voice was strangely familiar; caught by it, as one's whole being may be caught by intolerable agony or joy, I waited, in a kind of rigour, for it to come again. I heard it, then—calling my own name, strongly and insistently, three times.

"I would have risen; I would have opened the door and rushed out, but Father Patrick's arm was around me, his hand pressed over my mouth. 'Don't answer,' he whispered urgently, and held me until the noises had passed away.

"He lay back on his pillow then, and smiled at me happily, and fell asleep."

FitzGerald, too, smiled happily as he ended his tale.

He was tired. Doctor Christiansen's blue eyes were alight. "It was poor Dermot," he asked gently—"He who called?"

FitzGerald answered, "It was his voice."

"He would have loved to take you, instead of that other? If you had answered—is it not so—you would have followed within a year?"

"So Father Patrick said."

"And he recovered—your good friend?"

"Thank God," FitzGerald answered, "he is living still."

Doctor Christiansen spoke wonderingly, "They prayed for him well, those Dead."

THE REAPING RACE[1]

By LIAM O'FLAHERTY

(From *The Dublin Magazine*)

AT dawn the reapers were already in the rye field. It was the big rectangular field owned by James McDara, the retired engineer. The field started on the slope of a hill and ran down gently to the sea-road that was covered with sand. It was bound by a low stone fence, and the yellow heads of the rye-stalks leaned out over the fence, all round in a thick mass, jostling and crushing one another as the morning breeze swept over them with a swishing sound.

McDara himself, a white-haired old man in grey tweeds, was standing outside the fence on the sea-road, waving his stick and talking to a few people who had gathered even at that early hour. His brick-red face was all excitement, and he waved his blackthorn stick as he talked in a loud voice to the men about him.

"I measured it out yesterday," he was saying, "as even as it could be done. Upon my honour there isn't an inch in the difference between one strip and another of the three strips. D'ye see? I have laid lines along the length of the field so they can't go wrong. Come here and I'll show ye."

He led the men along from end to end of the field and showed how he had measured it off into three even parts and marked the strips with lines laid along the ground.

"Now, it couldn't be fairer," cried the old man, as excited as a schoolboy. "When I fire my revolver they'll all start together, and the first couple to finish their strip gets a five pound note."

The peasants nodded their heads and looked at old McDara seriously, although each one of them thought he

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was crazy to spend five pounds on the cutting of a field that could be cut for two pounds. They were, however, almost as excited as McDara himself, for the three best reapers in the whole island of Inverara had entered for the competition. They were now at the top of the field on the slope of the hill ready to commence. Each had his wife with him to tie the sheaves as they were cut and bring food and drink.

They had cast lots for the strips by drawing three pieces of seaweed from McDara's hat. Now they had taken up position on their strips awaiting the signal. Although the sun had not yet warmed the earth and the sea breeze was cold, each man had stripped to his shirt. The shirts were open at the chest and the sleeves were rolled above the elbow. They wore grey woollen shirts. Around his waist each had a multi-coloured "crios," a long knitted belt made of pure wool. Below that they wore a white frieze drawers with the ends tucked into woollen stockings that were embroidered at the tops. Their feet were protected by raw-hide shoes. None of them wore a cap. The women all wore red petticoats, with a little shawl tied around their heads.

On the left were Michael Gill and his wife, Susan. Michael was a long wiry man, with fair hair that came down over his forehead and was cropped to the bone all round the skull. He had a hook nose, and his lean jaws were continually moving backwards and forwards. His little blue eyes were fixed on the ground, and his long white eyelashes almost touched his cheek-bones, as if he slept. He stood motionless, with his reaping-hook in his right hand and his left hand in his belt. Now and again he raised his eyelashes, listening for the signal to commence. His wife was almost as tall as himself, but she was plump and rosy-cheeked. A silent woman, she stood there thinking of her eight-months-old son whom she had left at home in charge of her mother.

In the middle Johnny Bodkin stood with his arms folded and his legs spread wide apart, talking to his wife in a low serious voice. He was a huge man, with fleshy limbs and neck, and black hair that had gone bald over his forehead.

His forehead was very white and his cheeks were very red. He always frowned, twitching his black eyebrows. His wife, Mary, was short, thin, sallow-faced, and her upper teeth protruded slightly over her lower lip.

On the right was Pat Considine and his wife, Kate. Kate was very big and brawny, with a freckled face and a very marked moustache on her upper lip. She had a great mop of sandy-coloured curly hair that kept coming undone. She talked to her husband in a loud, gruff, masculine voice, full of good humour. Her husband, on the other hand, was a small man, small and slim, and beginning to get wrinkles in his face, although he was not yet forty. His face had once been a brick-red colour, but now it was becoming sallow. He had lost most of his front teeth. He stood loosely, grinning towards McDara, his little loose slim body hiding its strength.

Then McDara waved his stick. He lifted his arm. A shot rang out. The reaping race began. In one movement the three men sank to their right knees like soldiers on parade at musketry practice. Their left hands in the same movement closed about a bunch of rye-stalks. The curved reaping hooks whirled in the air, and then there was a crunching sound, the sound that hungry cows make eating long fresh grass in spring. Then three little slender bunches of rye-stalks lay flat on the dewy grass beneath the fence, one bunch behind each reaper's bent left leg. The three women waited in nervous silence for the first sheaf. It would be an omen of victory or defeat. One, two, three, four bunches . . . Johnny Bodkin, snorting like a furious horse, was dropping his bunches almost without stopping. With a loud cheer he raised his reaping hook in the air and spat on it, crying "First sheaf!" His wife dived at it with both hands. Separating a little bunch of stalks, she encircled the head of the sheaf and then bound it with amazing rapidity, her long thin fingers moving like knitting needles. The other reapers and their wives had not paused to look. All three reapers had cut their first sheaves and their wives were on their knees tying.

Working in the same furious manner in which he had begun, Bodkin was soon far ahead of his competitors. He

was cutting his sheaves in an untidy manner, and he was leaving hummocks behind him on the ground owing to the irregularities of his strokes, but his speed and strength were amazing. His great hands whirled the hook and closed on the stalks in a ponderous manner, and his body hurtled along like the carcase of an elephant trotting through a forest, but there was a rhythm in the never-ending movement of his limbs that was not without beauty. And behind came his wife, tying, tying speedily, with her hard face gathered together in a serious frown like a person meditating on a grave decision.

Considine and his wife were second. Considine, now that he was in action, showed surprising strength and an agility that was goat-like. When his lean, long, bony arms moved to slash the rye, muscles sprang up all over his bent back like an intricate series of springs being pressed. Every time he hopped on his right knee to move along his line of reaping he emitted a sound like a groan cut short. His wife, already perspiring heavily, worked almost on his heels, continually urging him on, laughing and joking in her habitual loud hearty voice.

Michael Gill and his wife came last. Gill had begun to reap with the slow methodic movements of a machine driven at low pressure. He continued at exactly the same pace, never changing, never looking up to see where his opponents were. His long lean hands moved noiselessly, and only the sharp crunching rush of the teeth of his reaping hook through the yellow stalks of the rye could be heard. His long drooping eyelashes were always directed towards the point where his hook was cutting. He never looked behind to see had he enough for a sheaf before beginning another. All his movements were calculated beforehand, calm, monotonous, deadly accurate. Even his breathing was light, and came through his nose like one who sleeps healthily. His wife moved behind him in the same manner, tying each sheaf daintily, without exertion.

As the day advanced people gathered from all quarters watching the reapers. The sun rose into the heavens. There was a fierce heat. Not a breath of wind. The rye-stalks no longer moved. They stood in perfect silence, their

heads a whitish colour, their stalks golden. Already there was a large irregular gash in the rye, ever increasing. The bare patch, green with little clover plants that had been sown with the rye, was dotted with sheaves, already whitening in the hot sun. Through the hum of conversation the regular crunching of the reaping hooks could be heard.

A little before noon Bodkin had cut half his strip. A stone had been placed on the marking line at half-way, and when Bodkin reached the stone he stood up with the stone in his hand and yelled: "This is a proof," he cried, "that there was never a man born in the island of Inverara as good as Johnny Bodkin." There was an answering cheer from the crowd on the fence, but big Kate Considine humorously waved a sheaf above her head and yelled in her rough man's voice: "The day is young yet, Bodkin of the soft flesh!" The crowd roared with laughter, and Bodkin fumed, but he did not reply. His wits were not very sharp. Gill and his wife took no notice. They did not raise their eyes from the reaping.

Bodkin's wife was the first to go for the mid-day meal. She brought a can full of cold tea and a whole oven cake of white flour, cut in large pieces, each piece coated heavily with butter. She had four eggs, too, boiled hard. The Bodkin couple had no children, and on that account they could afford to live well, at least far better than the other peasants. Bodkin just dropped his reaping hook and ravenously devoured three of the eggs, while his wife, no less hungrily, ate the fourth. Then Bodkin began to eat the bread and butter and drink the cold tea with as much speed as he had reaped the rye. It took him and his wife exactly two minutes and three-quarters to finish that great quantity of food and drink. Out of curiosity, Gallagher, the doctor, counted the time down on the shore road. As soon as they had finished eating they set to work again as fiercely as ever.

Considine had come level with Bodkin, just as Bodkin resumed work, and instead of taking a rest for their meal, Considine and his wife ate in the ancient fashion current among Inverara peasants during contests of the kind. Kate fed her husband as he worked with buttered oaten cake.

Now and again she handed him the tea-can and he paused to take a drink. In that way he was still almost level with Bodkin when he had finished eating. The spectators were greatly excited at this eagerness on the part of Considine, and some began to say that he would win the race.

Nobody took any notice of Gill and his wife, but they had never stopped to eat, and they had steadily drawn nearer to their opponents. They were still some distance in the rear, but they seemed quite fresh, whereas Bodkin appeared to be getting exhausted, handicapped by his heavy meal, and Considine was obviously using up the reserves of his strength. Then, when they reached the stone at half-way, Gill quietly laid down his hook and told his wife to bring the meal. She brought it from the fence, buttered oaten bread and a bottle of new milk, with oatmeal in the bottom of the bottle. They ate slowly, and then rested for a while. People began to jeer at them when they saw them resting, but they took no notice. After about twenty minutes they got up to go to work again. A derisive cheer arose, and an old man cried out: "Yer a disgrace to me name, Michael." "Never mind, father," called Michael, "the race isn't finished yet." Then he spat on his hands and seized his hook once more.

Then, indeed, excitement rose to a high pitch, because the Gill couple resumed work at a great speed. Their movements were as mechanical and regular as before, but they worked at almost twice the speed. People began to shout at them. Then betting began among the gentry. Until now the excitement had not been intense, because it seemed a foregone conclusion that Bodkin would win since he was so far ahead. Now, however, Bodkin's supremacy was challenged. He still was a long way ahead of Gill, but he was visibly tired, and his hook made mistakes now and again, gripping the earth with its point. Bodkin was lathered with sweat. He now began to look behind him at Gill, irritated by the shouts of the people.

Just before four o'clock Considine suddenly collapsed, utterly exhausted. He had to be carried over to the fence. A crowd gathered around, and the rector, Mr. Robertson, gave him a swig from his brandy flask that revived

him. He made an effort to go back to work, but he was unable to rise. "Stay there," said his wife angrily, "you're finished. I'll carry on myself." Rolling up her sleeves farther on her fat arms, she went back to the reaping hook, and with a loud yell began to reap furiously. "Bravo," cried McDara, "I'll give the woman a special prize. Gallagher," he cried, hitting the doctor on the shoulder, "after all . . . the Irish race . . . ye know what I mean . . . man, alive."

But all centred their attention on the struggle between Bodkin and Gill. Spurred by rage, Bodkin had made a supreme effort, and he began to gain ground once more. His immense body, moving from left to right and back again across his line of reaping, seemed to swallow the long yellow rye stalks, so quickly did they fall before it. And as the sheaf was completed his lean wife grabbed it up and tied it. But still, when Bodkin paused at five o'clock to cast a look behind him, there was Gill coming with terrible regularity. Bodkin suddenly felt all the weariness of the day overcome him.

It struck him first in the shape of an intense thirst. He sent his wife up to the fence for their extra can of tea. When she came back with it he began to drink. But the more he drank the thirstier he became. His friends in the crowd of spectators shouted at him in warning, but his thirst maddened him. He kept drinking. The shore wall and victory were very near now. He kept looking towards it in a dazed way as he whirled his hook. And he kept drinking. Then his senses began to dull. He became sleepy. His movements became almost unconscious. He only saw the wall, and he fought on. He began to talk to himself. He reached the wall at one end of his strip. He had only to cut down to the other end and finish. Three sheaves more, and then . . . Best man in Inverara . . . Five Pound Note . . .

But just then a ringing cheer came to his ears, and the cry rose on the air: "Gill has won." Bodkin collapsed with a groan.

THE YEARBOOK OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH SHORT STORY JUNE, 1924, TO MAY, 1925

THE BEST BRITISH AND IRISH SHORT STORIES

JUNE 1, 1924, TO MAY 31, 1925

NOTE. *Only stories by British and Irish authors are listed. American as well as British and Irish periodicals have been reviewed.*

ARDEN, MARY.
Dream. Adelphi. January.

ARLEN, MICHAEL.
Ace of Cads. Everybody's Magazine. June, 1924.
Ace of Thirteens. Century. October, 1924.
Battle of Berkeley Square. Hutchinson's Magazine. May.
Garden of Lamoir. Royal Magazine. June, 1924.
Gentleman from America. Tatler. Christmas Number, 1924.
One Gold Coin. Bookman (N. Y.). January-February.
Prince of the Jews. Woman. January.

ARMSTRONG, MARTIN.
Nanny. Saturday Review (London). May 30.

AUMONIER, STACY.
Dark Red Roses. Everybody's Magazine. October, 1924.
Everlasting Club. London Mercury. March.
Juxtapositions. Hutchinson's Magazine. January.
Madame Fatality. Sketch. Christmas Number, 1924.
Not Done. Strand Magazine. September, 1924.
One Sunday Morning. Strand Magazine. December, 1924.
Ride to Briteuil. Bermondsey Book. December, 1924.
Young Man Who Wrote Home to Mother. Strand Magazine, March.

AUSTIN, F. BRITTEN.
Diamond Cut Diamond. Strand Magazine. May.
Under the Lens. Blue Book Magazine. September, 1924.

BARFIELD, OWEN.
Devastated Area. New Age. July 3, 1924.

BEATTY, ANNE.
Michael's Mother. Irish Statesman. July 12 and 19, 1924.

BELLOC, HILAIRE.
Bag. G. K.'s Weekly. March 21.

BENNETT, ARNOLD.
Elsie and the Child. Story-Teller. September, 1924.

BENNETT, ROLF.
Cask. Adventure. November 20, 1924.

BENSON, E. F.
Corsthine. Hutchinson's Magazine. September, 1924.
Reconciliation. Hutchinson's Magazine. July, 1924.
Temple. Hutchinson's Magazine. November, 1924.

Beresford, J. D.
Cave. Adelphi. September, 1924.
Berman, Hannah.
"Beggar." Transatlantic Review. September, 1924.
Bibesco, Princess Elizabeth.
"La Peronnière Letters." Chicago Tribune. December 28, 1924.
Red Hair. Chicago Tribune. July 27, 1924.
Whole Story. Chicago Tribune. September 21, 1924.
Blackwood, Algernon.
Full Circle. English Review. May.
Bottome, Phyllis.
Wonder-Child. Atlantic Monthly. January.
Bowen, Elizabeth.
Ann Lee's. Spectator. July 5, 1924.
Bowen, Marjorie.
Professor and His Wife. Sovereign Magazine. April.
Brown, Hilton.
Call It Murder. Cornhill Magazine. February.
Bullett, Gerald.
Renewal of Youth. London Mercury. August, 1924.
Burke, Thomas.
Adventurer. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. March 28.
Spleen. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. October 4, 1924.
White Wings. Hutchinson's Magazine. June, 1924. Collier's Weekly, July 26, 1924.

Chesterton, G. K.
Asylum of Adventure. MacLean's Magazine. November 1, 1924.
Chief Mourner of Marne. Harper's Magazine. May.
Curse of the Golden Cross. Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine. May.
Dr. Hyde, Detective, and the White Pillars Murder. English Life. January.
Elusive Companion of Parson White. Story-Teller. October, 1924. Chicago Tribune, August 31, 1924.
Exclusive Luxury of Enoch Oates. Story-Teller. November, 1924.
Man With Two Beards. Harper's Magazine. April. Cassell's Magazine. April.
Mirror of Death. Cassell's Magazine. March.
Ultimate Ultimatum of the League of the Long Bow. Story-Teller. March.
Unobtrusive Traffic of Captain Pierce. Story-Teller. August, 1924. Chicago Tribune. July 20, 1924.
Unprecedented Architecture of Commander Blair. Story-Teller. January.
Unpresentable Appearance of Colonel Crane. Story-Teller, June, 1924.
Unthinkable Theory of Professor Green. Story-Teller. December, 1924.

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Fifty Pounds. Calendar. March.
Italian Whirligig. Spectator. July 26, 1924.
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"DOYLE, LYNN."
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Mr. Peden Keeps His Cook. Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine. March. Century. December, 1924.

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Faithful Jenny Dove. Hutchinson's Magazine. October, 1924.
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Prize "Pip." Bermondsey Book. June, 1924.
Powys, T. F.
Benjamin Jim. New Leader. February 13.
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ARTICLES ON THE SHORT STORY IN BRITISH AND IRISH PERIODICALS

JUNE 1, 1924, TO MAY 31, 1925

NOTE. *Capital letters are employed to indicate the author of an article.*

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ACLAND, B. D.
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Robert Louis Stevenson. Bookman (London). October, 1924. (67:12.)
AIKEN, CONRAD.
Osbert Sitwell. Criterion. October, 1924. (3:141.)
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ALDINGTON, RICHARD.
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Richard Garnett. Nation (London). December 13, 1924. (36:415.)
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Anderson, Frederick Irving.
By J. D. Symon. Illustrated London News. April 18. (166:678.)
Anderson, Sherwood.
By C. M. Grieve. New Age. November 27, 1924. (36:55.)
By Alexander Werth. New Age. June 19, 1924. (35:94.)
ARMSTRONG, MARTIN.
Katharine Mansfield. Bookman (London). October, 1924. (67:32.)
Aumonier, Stacy.
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Austin, F. Britten.
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Baerlein, Henry.
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Bailey, H. C.
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Baring, Maurice.
Anonymous. Calendar. April. (1:174.)
Anonymous. Empire Review. May. (41:563.)
Anonymous. Morning Post. February 20. (11.)
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By Edwin Muir. Nation (London). March 14. (36:816.)
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By Milton Waldman. London Mercury. April. (11:653.)
Bateson, J. K.
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Becke, Louis.
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Bell, Clive.
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Bennett, Arnold.
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By John Franklin. New Statesman. November 8, 1924. (24:141.)
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By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). October 25, 1924. (54:298.)
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Bettany, F. G.
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Bierce, Ambrose.
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Bone, Muirhead.
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Bramah, Ernest.
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By Gerald Gould. Bookman (London). January. (67:214.)
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CADMAN, H. ASHWELL.
Rudyard Kipling. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:92.)
Calvert, C.
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CANDLER, EDMUND.
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Canfield, Dorothy.
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CARDUCCI, PHILIP.
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Norman Davey. Spectator. December 20, 1924. (994.)
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CARR, PHILIP.
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Chekhov, Anton.
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By Henry Murray. Sunday Times. February 22. (8.)
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By George Sampson. Weekly Westminster. March 21. (3:627.)
By Arthur Waugh. Daily Telegraph. February 27. (13.)
By Leonard Woolf. Nation (London). February 21. (36:717.)
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By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. October 17, 1924. 5:1004.)
By L. P. Hartley. Bookmaker (London). March. (67:314.)
By Ernest Hemingway. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:341.)
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By H. R. Lenormand. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:338.)
By E. V. Lucas. English Life. September, 1924. (3:247.)
By P. M. Spectator. December 20, 1924. (989.)
By Desmond MacCarthy. Empire Review. September, 1924. (40:219.) New Statesman. August 9, 1924. (23:523.)

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By George Reston Malloch. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:244.)
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By Lady Ottoline Morrell. Nation (London). August 30, 1924. (35:666.)
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By Antoni Potocki. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:348.)
By William Power. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:239.)
By Edwin Pugh. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. August 23, 1924. (2:575.)
By Forrest Reid. Nation (London). October 11, 1924. (36:58.)
By Denis Saurat. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:284.)
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By Arthur Symons. Queen. August 20, 1924. (5.)
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By H. M. Tomlinson. Weekly Westminster. August 9, 1924. (2:448.) January 31. (3:412.)
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J. C. Squire. Manchester Guardian. October 24, 1924. (7.)

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Couperus, Louis.
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Courtney, W. L.
Mary Russell Mitford. Daily Telegraph. April 24. (15.)
Crane, Stephen.
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Osbert Sitwell. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. August 23, 1924. (2:580.)
Cumberland, Gerald.
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Cunninghame-Graham, R. B.
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Curle, Richard.
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Dane, Clemence.
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Dark, Sidney.
Anton Chekhov. John o' London's Weekly. March 14. (12:865.)
Davey, Norman.
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By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). January 3. (139:12.)
De La Mare, Walter.
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). June 14, 1924. (137:614.)
By Richard Hughes. Spectator. August 2, 1924. (166.)
By C. S. Queen. June 11, 1924. (26.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation (London). June 28, 1924. (35:414.)

Deland, Margaret.
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Dell, Robert.
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Douglas, Sir George.
Joseph Conrad. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:236.)
Drieu La Rochelle, P.
By Edgell Rickwood. Calendar. April. (1:169.)
Dudeney, Mrs. Henry.
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. July 4, 1924. (5:640.)
By Forrest Reid. Nation (London). June 21, 1924. (35:384.)
By Mary Webb. Bookman (London). August, 1924. (66:278.)
Duke, Winifred.
Violet Jacob. Northern Review. June-July, 1924. (1:97.)

Edgar, Pelham.
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Edginton, May.
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Ernle, Lord.
Aino Kallas. Nineteenth Century. September, 1924. (96:343.)
Evans, A. W.
Anatole France. Bookman's Journal. November 24, 1924. (11:47.)

Fausset, Hugh I'A.
Joseph Conrad. Bookman's Journal. December, 1924. (67:194.)
Ford, Ford Madox.
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Fox, R. M.
Joseph Conrad. Irish Statesman. November 1, 1924. (3:239.)
France, Anatole.
Anonymous. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:51.)
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Anonymous. Times (London). October 13, 1924. (19.)
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By F. G. Bettany. Bookman (London). November, 1924. (67:95.)
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France, Anatole. (*Continued.*)
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Francis Gribble. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. October 25, 1924. (3:42.)
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By T. P. O'Connor. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. February 11. (3:611.)
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By Madame Turquet-Milnes. Graphic. October 18, 1924. (110:628.)
By A. B. Walkley. Times (London). October 15, 1924. (12.)
By Winifred Stephens Whale. Bookman (London). November, 1924. (67:92.)

Franklin, John.
Maurice Baring. New Statesman. March 28. (24:719.)
Louis Becke. New Statesman. March 14. (24:659.)
Arnold Bennett. New Statesman. November 8, 1924. (24:141.)
Sir Coleridge Kennard. New Statesman. December 6, 1924. Supplement. (viii.)
Katharine Mansfield. New Statesman. September 13, 1924. (23:648.)
Viola Meynell. New Statesman. December 6, 1924. Supplement. (viii.)
Alexsei Remizov. New Statesman. November 22, 1924. (24:205.)
V. Sackville-West. New Statesman. November 22, 1924. (24:205.)
Pauline Smith. New Statesman. March 14. (24:659.)

Fraser, Brodie.
John Galsworthy. Sunday Times. April 26. (9.)

FREEMAN, JOHN.
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Robert Louis Stevenson. London Mercury. February. (11:435.)

Gabory, Georges.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. April 2. (24:240.)
GALSWORTHY, JOHN.
Anatole France. Manchester Guardian. October 23, 1924. (8.)
Galsworthy, John.
Anonymous. Observer. April 12. (4.) Times Literary Supplement. August 28, 1924. (23:522.) April 16. (24:264.)
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By Brodie Fraser. Sunday Times. April 26. (9.)
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). April 25. (140:437.)
By L. P. Hartley. Bookman (London). May. (68:114.)
By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). April 4. (55:234.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. May 1. (6:424.)
By James Milne. Graphic. April 4. (111:554.)
By Edwin Muir. Nation (London). April 18. (37:78.)
By V. Sackville-West. Nation (London). November 8, 1924. (36:236.)
GARNETT, DAVID.
Joseph Conrad. Vogue (London). Early November, 1924. (46.)
V. Sackville-West. Vogue (London). Early November, 1924. (46.)
GARNETT, EDWARD.
Joseph Conrad. Weekly Westminster. October 18, 1924. (2:732.) February 14. (3:473.) Nation (London). December 6, 1924. (36:366.) February 21. (36:718.)
Stephen Crane. Nation (London). October 11, 1924. (36:58.)
Garnett, Richard.
By Richard Aldington. Nation (London). December 13, 1924. (36:415.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. November 20, 1924. (23:753.)
By H. M. Tomlinson. Weekly Westminster. November 29, 1924. (3:146.)
GEORGE, W. L.
Anatole France. Fortnightly Review. November, 1924. (639.)
Gerould, Katharine Fullerton.
Anonymous. Spectator. February 21. (294.)
Anonymous. John o' London's Weekly. April 11. (13:58.)
Ghost Stories.
By Andrew Carey. Spectator. December 20, 1924. (994.)
By C. E. M. Joad. New Leader. January 2. (11.)
By H. M. Tomlinson. Weekly Westminster. December 27, 1924. (3:276.)

Gibbs, Sir Philip.
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Glesner, Edmond.
By Louis Van Riel. London Mercury. August, 1924. (10:419.)
Goldenveizer, A.B.
Count Lyof Tolstoi. Weekly Westminster. June 21, 1924. (2:241.) June 28, 1924. (2:272.) July 5, 1924. (2:301.)
Gorky, Maxim.
Count Lyof Tolstoi. Adelphi. October, 1924. (2:395.)
Gorky, Máxim.
Anonymous. Saturday Review (London). February 14. (139:164.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. January 1. (24:7.)
By J. F. H. New Statesman. September 6, 1924. (23:622.)
By H. C. Harwood. Spectator. January 10. (48.)
By Ida A. R. Wylie. Queen. January 21. (26.)
Gould, Gerald.
Stacy Aumonier. Bookman (London). January. (67:214.)
Arnold Bennett. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:79.)
British Short Story. Bookman (London). January. (67:214.)
Louis Couperus. Saturday Review (London). July 26, 1924. (138:97.)
Norman Davey. Saturday Review (London). June 14, 1924. (137:614.)
Walter De La Mare. Saturday Review (London). January 3. (139:12.)
John Galsworthy. Saturday Review (London). April 25. (140:437.)
L. P. Hartley. Saturday Review (London). July 12, 1924. (138:47.)
Coralie Hobson. Saturday Review (London). July 12, 1924. (138:47.) Bookman's Journal. January. (11:173.)
Shane Leslie. Bookman (London). January. (67:214.) Saturday Review (London). December 13, 1924. (138:612.)
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Katharine Mansfield. Saturday Review (London). September 13, 1924. (138:268.)
Ethel Colburn Mayne. Bookman's Journal. April. (12:111.) Saturday Review (London). April 4. (139:363.)
Alfred Noyes. Saturday Review (London). August 16, 1924. (138:173.)
Liam O'Flaherty. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:79.)
Osbert Sitwell. Saturday Review (London). June 28, 1924. (137:670.)
Pauline Smith. Saturday Review (London). March 28. (139:330.)
J. C. Squire. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:79.) Saturday Review (London). October 25, 1924. (138:426.)

GOULD, GERALD. (*Continued.*)
James Stephens. Saturday Review (London). November 15, 1924. (138:498.)
Edith Wharton. Saturday Review (London). September 6, 1924. (138:244.)
GOSSE, SIR EDMUND.
J. C. Squire. Sunday Times. November 9, 1924.
GRAY, COLIN.
Osbert Sitwell. Eve. June 25, 1924. (17:419.)
GREY, ROWLAND.
Thomas Hardy. Cornhill. January. (58:26.)
GRIBBLE, FRANCIS.
Anatole France. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. October 25, 1924. (3:42.)
Henry James. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. February 28. (3:68.)
GRIEVE, C. M.
Sherwood Anderson. New Age. November 27, 1924. (36:55.)
Grimshaw, Beatrice.
Anonymous. Daily Telegraph. May 1. (13.)
Anonymous. Observer. April 19. (4.)

Hamilton, Helen.
By Beach Thomas. Weekly Westminster. July 12, 1924. (2:339.)
HAMILTON, MARY AGNES.
Arnold Bennett. Time and Tide. November 7, 1924. (5:1081.)
Joseph Conrad. Time and Tide. October 17, 1924. (5:1004.)
Aldous Huxley. Time and Tide. June 13, 1924. (5:568.)
Guy de Maupassant. Weekly Westminster. November 1, 1924. (3:19.)
Viola Meynell. Time and Tide. December 12, 1924. (5:1220.)
Oliver Onions. Weekly Westminster. June 14, 1924. (2:217.)
Osbert Sitwell. Time and Tide. June 27, 1924. (5:615.)
Hardy, Thomas.
Anonymous. Time and Tide. June 13, 1924. (15:566.)
By Rowland Grey. Cornhill. January. (58:26.)
By W. M. Parker. Fortnightly Review. December, 1924. (116:804.)
Harte, Francis Bret.
By J. P. Collins. Nineteenth Century. October, 1924. (96:537.)
HARTLEY, L. P.
Arnold Bennett. Bookman (London). January. (67:227.)
Joseph Conrad. Bookman (London). March. (67:314.)
John Galsworthy. Bookman (London). May. (68:114.)
Coralie Hobson. Spectator. June 7, 1924. (926.)
Aldous Huxley. Spectator. June 7, 1924. (926.)
Katharine Mansfield. Spectator. September 6, 1924. (328.)
Viola Meynell. Bookman (London). January. (67:227.)
Christopher Rover. Spectator. July 26, 1924. (134.)
Osbert Sitwell. Spectator. July 19, 1924. (102.)

HARTLEY, L. P. (*Continued.*)
Wilbur Daniel Steele. Bookman (London). January. (67:227.)
Edith Wharton. Spectator. June 21, 1924. (1006.)
Stefan Zweig. Spectator. October 25, 1924. (613.)
Hartley, L. P.
Anonymous. Spectator. July 5, 1924. (22.)
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). July 12, 1924. (138:47.)
By F. H. Nation (London). July 19, 1924. (33:513.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Vogue (London). Late July, 1924. (45.)
HARWOOD, H. C.
Conrad Aiken. Outlook (London). May 2. (55:298.)
Arnold Bennett. Outlook (London). October 25, 1924. (54:298.)
British Short Story. Outlook (London). March 28. (55:218.)
John Galsworthy. Outlook (London). April 4. (55:234.)
Georgian Stories. Outlook (London). March 28. (55:218.)
Maxim Gorky. Spectator. January 10. (48.)
L. P. Hartley. Outlook (London). June 28, 1924. (53:454.)
Katharine Mansfield. Outlook (London). September 13, 1924. (54:191.)
Ethel Colburn Mayne. Outlook (London). March 28. (55:218.)
Viola Meynell. Outlook (London). November 22, 1924. (54:370.)
Christopher Rover. Outlook (London). August 2, 1924. 54:92.)
Osbert Sitwell. Outlook (London). June 21, 1924. (53:429.)
Peter Traill. Outlook (London). September 20, 1924. (54:207.)
Hearn, Lafcadio.
Anonymous. New Statesman. January 24. (24:450.)
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. December 24, 1924. (23:816.)
By Osbert Burdett. Outlook (London). January 17.
HEMINGWAY, ERNEST.
Joseph Conrad. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:341.)
Hobson, Coralie.
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). July 12, 1924. (138:47.) Bookman's Journal. January. (11:173.)
By L. P. Hartley. Spectator. June 7, 1924. (926.)
HOPKINS, R. THURSTON.
Rudyard Kipling. Bookman (London). October, 1924. (67:6.) Graphic. March 7. (372.)
HUDDLESTON, SISLEY.
Anatole France. John o' London's Weekly. October 25, 1924. (12:121.) February 21. (13:1.)
Paul Morand. John o' London's Weekly. February 7. (12:682.)
HUGHES, RICHARD.
Walter de la Mare. Spectator. August 2, 1924. (166.)

HUTCHINSON, VERE.
Joseph Conrad. John o' London's Weekly. August 23, 1924. (11:691.)
HUXLEY, ALDOUS.
Anton Chekhov. Nation (London). May 16. (37:204.)
Katharine Mansfield. Nation (London). May 16. (37:204.)
Huxley, Aldous.
By F. W. H. Manchester Guardian. August 1. (7.)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. June 13, 1924. (5:568.)
By L. P. Hartley. Spectator. June 7, 1924. (926.)
By E. B. C. Jones. Nation (London). June 14, 1924. (35:358.)
By C. E. Lawrence. Bookman (London). August, 1924. (66:73.)
By Raymond Mortimer. Vogue (London). Late June, 1924. (46.)
By A. T. Morris. Northern Review. August, 1924. (1:223.)
By J. B. Priestley. London Mercury. July, 1924. (10:319.)
By Forrest Reid. Irish Statesman. June 28, 1924. (2:496.)
By R. Ellis Roberts. Weekly Westminster. June 7, 1924. (2:183.)
By Ralph Wright. New Statesman. June 7, 1924. (23:258.)
Hyne, Cutcliffe.
By Stanley L. Wood. Pearson's Magazine (London). July, 1924. (29.)

IRVINE, A. BAIN.
Robert Louis Stevenson. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. October 25, 1924. (3:24.) November 1, 1924. (3:82.)

Jacob, Violet.
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James, Henry.
By Pelham Edgar. National Review. July, 1924. (83:730.)
By Francis Gribble. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. February 28. (3:678.)
By Percy Lubbock. Nation (London). December 13, 1924. (36:415.)
Jammes, Francis.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. June 12, 1924. (23:370.)
JEAN-AUBRY, G.
Jean Conrad. Fortnightly Review. September, 1924. (303.)
Bookman's Journal. October, 1924. (11:7.)
JEFFREY, WILLIAM.
Joseph Conrad. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:243.)
JOAD, C. E. M.
Ghost Stories. New Leader. January 2. (11.)
JONES, E. B. C.
Aldous Huxley. Nation (London). June 14, 1924. (35:358.)

Joynt, Maud.
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Kallas, Aino.
By B. D. Acland. G. K.'s Weekly. April 18. (1:90.)
By Lord Ernle. Nineteenth Century. September, 1924. (96:343.)
By T. P. O'Connor. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. June 21, 1924. (2:283.)
By A. W. Northern Review. May, 1924. (1:71.)
Kelly, Francis J.
Joseph Conrad. Irish Statesman. September 6, 1924. (2:820.)
Kennard, Sir Coleridge.
By Andrew Carey. Spectator. December 20, 1924. (994.)
By John Franklin. New Statesman. December 6, 1924. Supplement (viii.)
By Milton Waldman. London Mercury. February. (11:429.)
Kernahan, Coulson.
F. Britten Austin. Bookman (London). August, 1924. (66:282.)
Alfred Noyes. Bookman (London). September, 1924. (66:315.)
Kipling, Rudyard.
Anonymous. Bookman's Journal. September, 1924. (10:210.) October, 1924. (11:42.)
By H. Ashwell Cadman. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:92.)
By R. Thurston Hopkins. Bookman (London). October, 1924. (67:6.) Graphic. March 7. (372.)
By Flora Livingston. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:92)
By Nathan Van Patten. Bookman's Journal. October, 1924. (11:43.)
Koteliansky, S. S.
Anton Chekhov. Adelphi. August, 1924. (2:224.)

Lang, Iain.
Pauline Smith. T. P.'s and Cassell's Weekly. March 28. (3:845.)
Lardner, Ring W.
By Gilbert Seldes. Criterion. January. (3:284.)
Law, Alice.
Branwell Brontë. Bookman (London). April. (68:4.)
Lawrence, C. E.
Aldous Huxley. Bookman (London). August, 1924. (66:273.)
Osbert Sitwell. Bookman (London). August, 1924. (66:279.)
Lawrence, D. H.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. July 24, 1924. (23:461.) May 28. (24:365.)
Anonymous. Observer. May 24. (4.)
By Gerald Bullett. Saturday Review (London). May 23. (139:556.)
By J. F. H. New Statesman. August 2, 1924. (23:498.)

Lawrence, D. H. (*Continued.*)
By Allan N. Monkhouse. Manchester Guardian. May 29. (7.)
By Louis J. McQuilland. G. K.'s Weekly. May 30. (1:237.)
By Edwin Muir. Nation (London). May 30. (37:270.)
By J. C. Squire. Observer. July 20, 1924. (4.)
Lenormand, J. R.
Joseph Conrad. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:338.)
Leslie, Shane.
Viola Meynell. Dublin Review. January-March. (176:144.)
Leslie, Shane.
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). December 13, 1924. (138:612.) Bookman (London). January. (67:214.)
Linati, Carlo di.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. March 19. (24:197.)
Livingston, Flora.
Rudyard Kipling. Bookman's Journal. November, 1924. (11:92.)
Locke, W. J.
By Walter Tittle. Strand. June, 1924. (67:546.)
London, Jack.
By Frederick Whyte. Bermondsey Book. September, 1924. (42.)
Lowndes, Mrs. Belloc.
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). May 2. (139:465.)
By N. G. Royde-Smith. Time and Tide. March 6. (6:224.)
Lubbock, Percy.
Henry James. Nation (London). December 13, 1924. (36:415.)
Lucas, E. V.
Joseph Conrad. English Life. September, 1924. (3:247.)
Lynd, Sylvia.
Mrs. Henry Dudeney. Time and Tide. July 4, 1924. (5:640.)
John Galsworthy. Time and Tide. May 1. (6:424.)
Katharine Mansfield. Time and Tide. September 12, 1924. (5:884.)
Ethel Colburn Mayne. Time and Tide. March 27. (6:297.)
Liam O'Flaherty. Time and Tide. October 24, 1924. (5:1027.)

M., C.
Viola Meynell. Manchester Guardian. November 7, 1924. (7.)
McAlmon, Robert.
Joseph Conrad. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:343.)
McAlmon, Robert.
By William Carlos Williams. Transatlantic Review. August, 1924. (2:215.)
Macardle, Dorothy.
By Cecil O'Hanlon. Dublin Magazine. March. (2:558.)

MacCarthy, Desmond.
Joseph Conrad. New Statesman. August 9, 1924. (23:523.)
Empire Review. September, 1924. (40:291.)
Anatole France. Empire Review. November, 1924. (40:528.)
Osbert Sitwell. New Statesman. August 2, 1924. (23:497.)
Robert Louis Stevenson. Empire Review. December, 1924. (40:668.)
Macdonald, Edward J.
Joseph Conrad. Outlook (London). August 16, 1924. (54:128.)
Machen, Arthur.
Anonymous. G. K.'s Weekly. March 21. (1:25.)
McQuilland, Louis J.
Maxwell Struthers Burt. G. K.'s Weekly. March 28. (21.)
"Donn Byrne." G. K.'s Weekly. March 21. (23.)
Sir Philip Gibbs. Bookman (London). February. (67:248.)
D. H. Lawrence. G. K.'s Weekly. May 30. (1:237.)
Malloch, George Reston.
Joseph Conrad. Northern Review. September, 1924. (1:244.)
Malone, Andrew E.
Joseph Conrad. Studies. September, 1924.
Mann, Thomas.
By John Phemister. Northern Review. June-July, 1924. (1:139.)
Mansfield, Katharine.
By Richard Aldington. Nation (London). September 6, 1924. (35:694).
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. August 21, 1924. (23:511.)
Anonymous. Observer. August 31, 1924. (4.)
By Martin Armstrong. Bookman (London). October, 1924. (67:32.)
By John Franklin. New Statesman. September 13, 1924. (23:648.)
By Gerald Gould. Saturday Review (London). September 13, 1924. (138:268.)
By L. P. Hartley. Spectator. September 6, 1924. (328.)
By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). September 13, 1924. (54:191.)
By Aldous Huxley. Nation (London). May 16. (37:204.)
By Sylvia Lynd. Time and Tide. September 12, 1924. (5:884.)
By J. B. Priestley. London Mercury. October, 1924. (10:658.)
By "Caleb Quotem." John o' London's Weekly. September 13, 1924. (11:780.)
By Edward Shanks. Queen. September 17, 1924. (11.)
By Edith Sitwell. Vogue (London). Early October, 1924. (81.)
By Humbert Wolfe. Weekly Westminster. October 4, 1924. (2:662.)

MARSHALL, H. P.
Herman Melville. London Mercury. November, 1924. (11:56.)
Maupassant, Guy de.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. October 16, 1924. (23:644.)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Weekly Westminster. November, 1924. (3:19.)
By C. Henry Warren. Bookman (London). November, 1924. (67:118.)
Maxwell, W. B.
Anonymous. Daily Telegraph. May 29. (17.)
Anonymous. Morning Post. May 29. (7.)
MAY, J. LEWIS.
Anatole France. John o' London's Weekly. October 25, 1924. (12:122.)
MAYNE, ETHEL COLBURN.
Joseph Conrad. Transatlantic Review. September, 1924. (2:345.)
Mayne, Ethel Colburn.
Anonymous. Times Literary Supplement. March 26. (24:220.)
Anonymous. Calendar. April. (1:174.)
Anonymous. Morning Post. April 3. (12.)
Anonymous. Adelphi. May. (2:1022.)
Anonymous. Empire Review. May. (41:565.)
Anonymous. English Review. May. (40:685.)
Anonymous. Spectator. May 16. (819.)
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By Edwin Muir. Nation (London). April 11. (37:51.)
By Ida A. R. Wylie. Queen. April 8. (16.)
MEGROZ, R. L.
Gerald Cumberland. Bookman (London). July, 1924. (66:210.)
Robert Louis Stevenson. Bookman (London). February. (67:270.)
MEGSON, C. H.
Robert Louis Stevenson. John o' London's Weekly. December 13, 1924. (12:435.)
MELVILLE, HERMAN.
Rafael Sabatini. Bookman (London). September, 1924. (66:307.)
Melville, Herman.
By H. P. Marshall. London Mercury. November, 1924. (66:307.)
Meynell, Viola.
By C. M. Manchester Guardian. November 7, 1924. (7.)
By Andrew Carey. Spectator. November 15, 1924. (748.)
By John Franklin. New Statesman. December 6, 1924. Supplement. (viii.)

Meynell, Viola. (*Continued.*)
By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Time and Tide. December 12, 1924. (5:1220.)
By L. P. Hartley. Bookman (London). January. (67:227.)
By H. C. Harwood. Outlook (London). November 22, 1924. (54:370.)
By Shane Leslie. Dublin Review. January-March. (176:144.)
By Edwin Muir. Nation (London). November 22, 1924. (36:302.)
By I. A. R. Wylie. Queen. November 19, 1924. (23.)

Milne, James.
John Galsworthy. Graphic. April 4. (111:554.)

Mitchell, Susan L.
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